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Mental Health Promotion in Canada: Enablers, Priorities, and Opportunities

2024 Annual Health Promotion Conference
Implementing a Systems Approach to Mental Health Promotion: From Policy to Practice
Galway University, Ireland

Stephanie Priest
Director General, Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Branch

Canadian Landscape



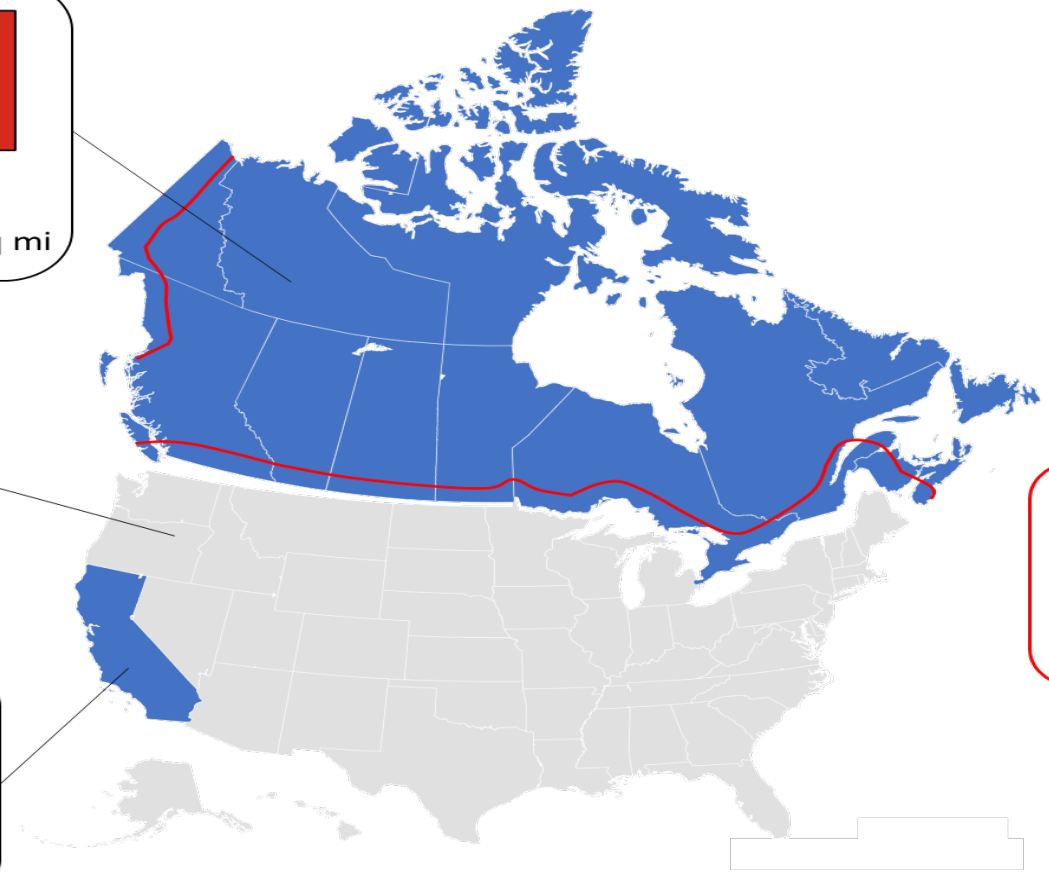
Canada
Pop: 38.93 million
Land mass: 3.86 million sq mi



United States
Pop: 333.30 million
Land mass: 3.79 million sq mi



California:
Pop: 39.03 million

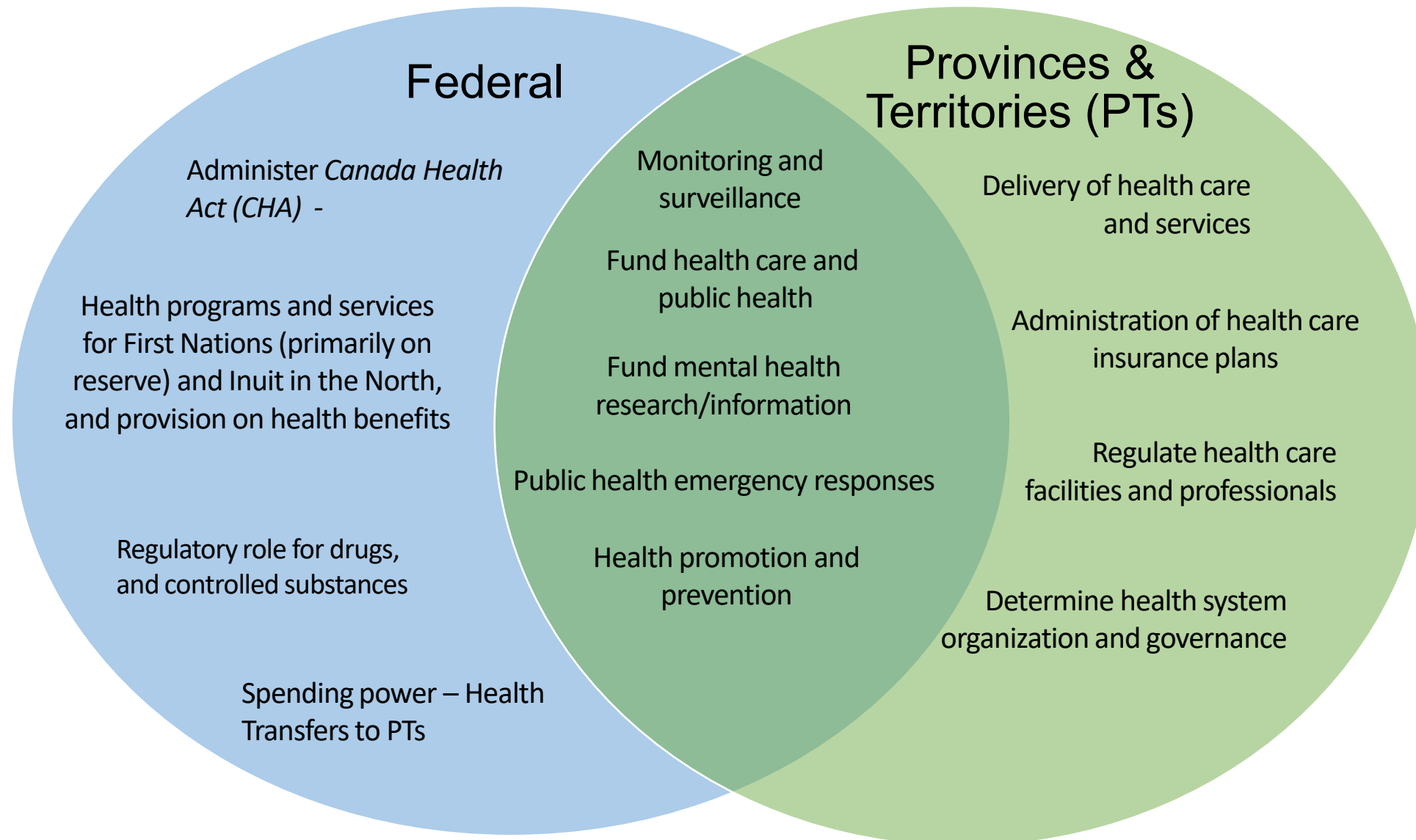


Ireland
Pop: 5.13 million
Land mass: 32,595 sq mi

Approximately 90% of the Canadian population resides within 100 miles of the Canada-US border.



Health is a Shared Responsibility



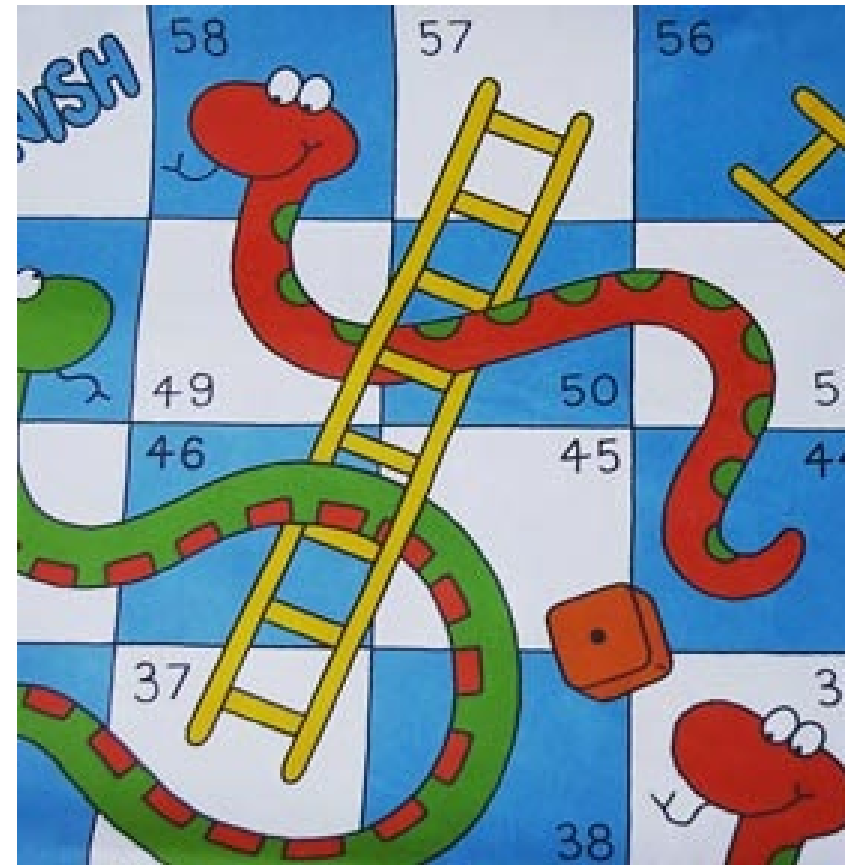
Snakes and Ladders

What comes first: enablers or obstacles?

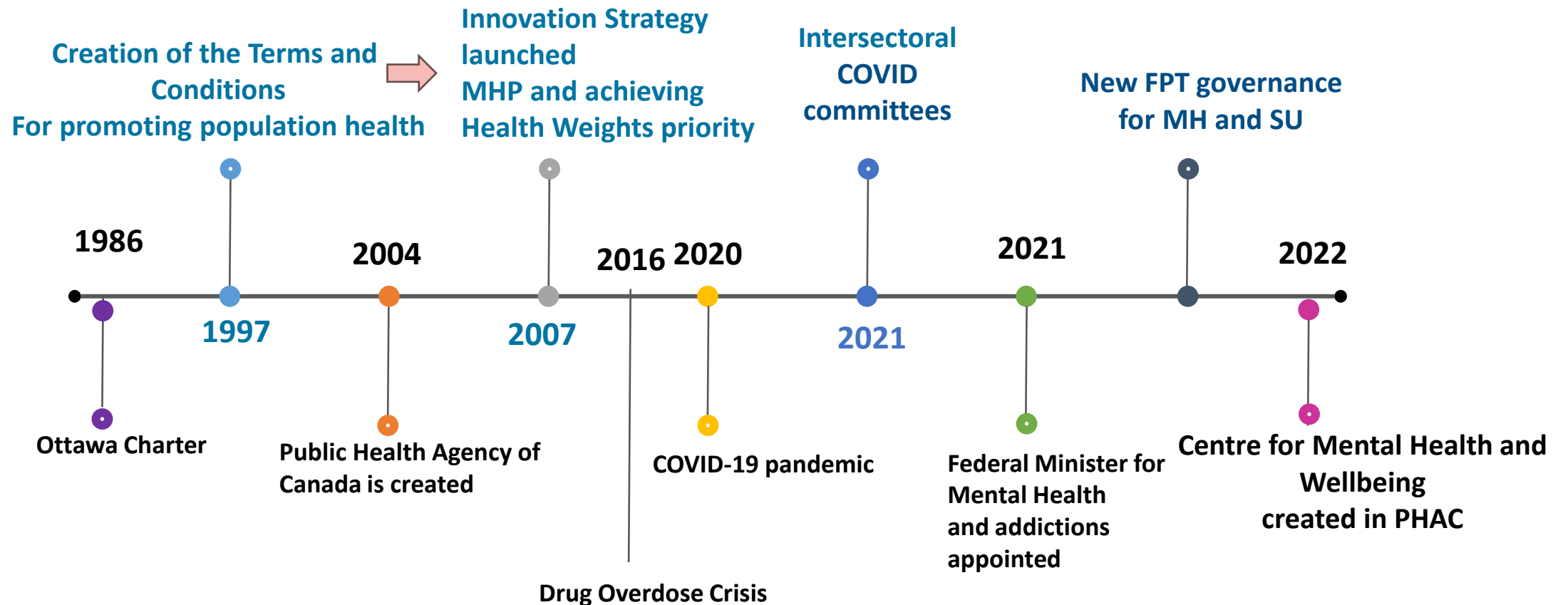
The ladders - Enablers

- Ministerial Mandates
- Governance
- Legislation and policy
- Frameworks and Strategies

Do we create our enablers solely to get over obstacles or do we set up our structures in advance? Or both?



Mental health promotion in Canada – *Key events and enablers opening policy windows*



Federal leadership: New Minister for Mental Health and Addictions

Enabling visibility and greater accountability with new structures

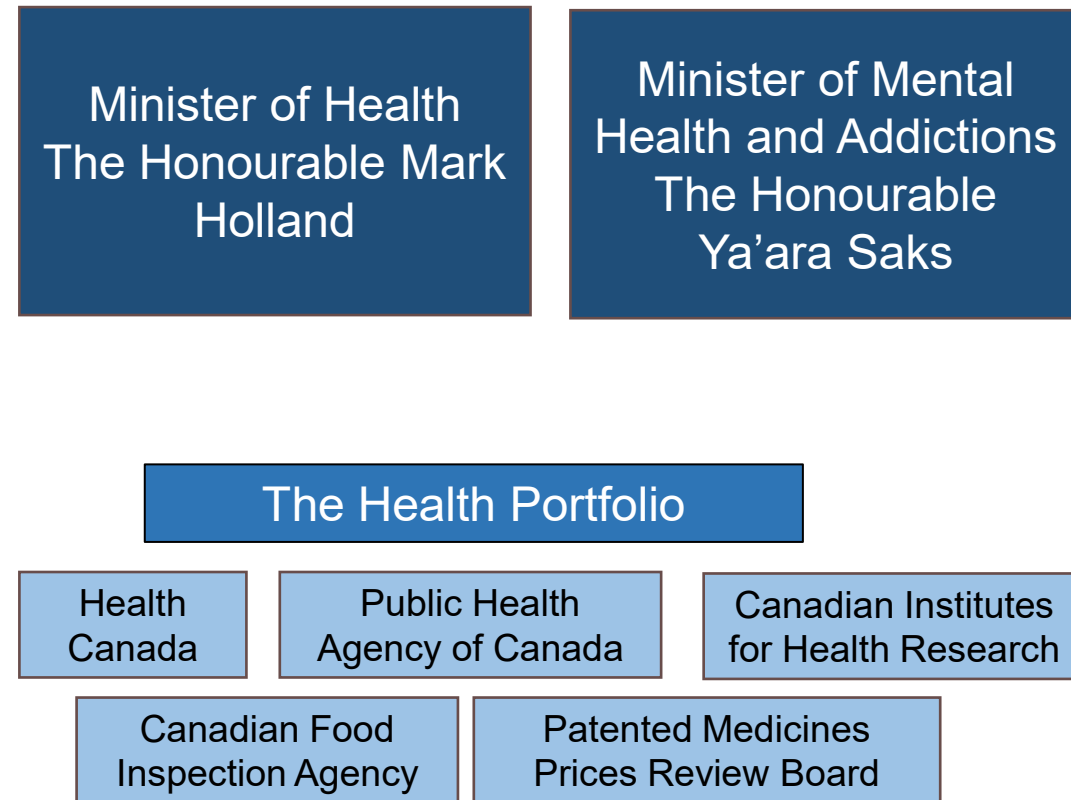
What?

Reorganised internal structures to create focal points for priorities:

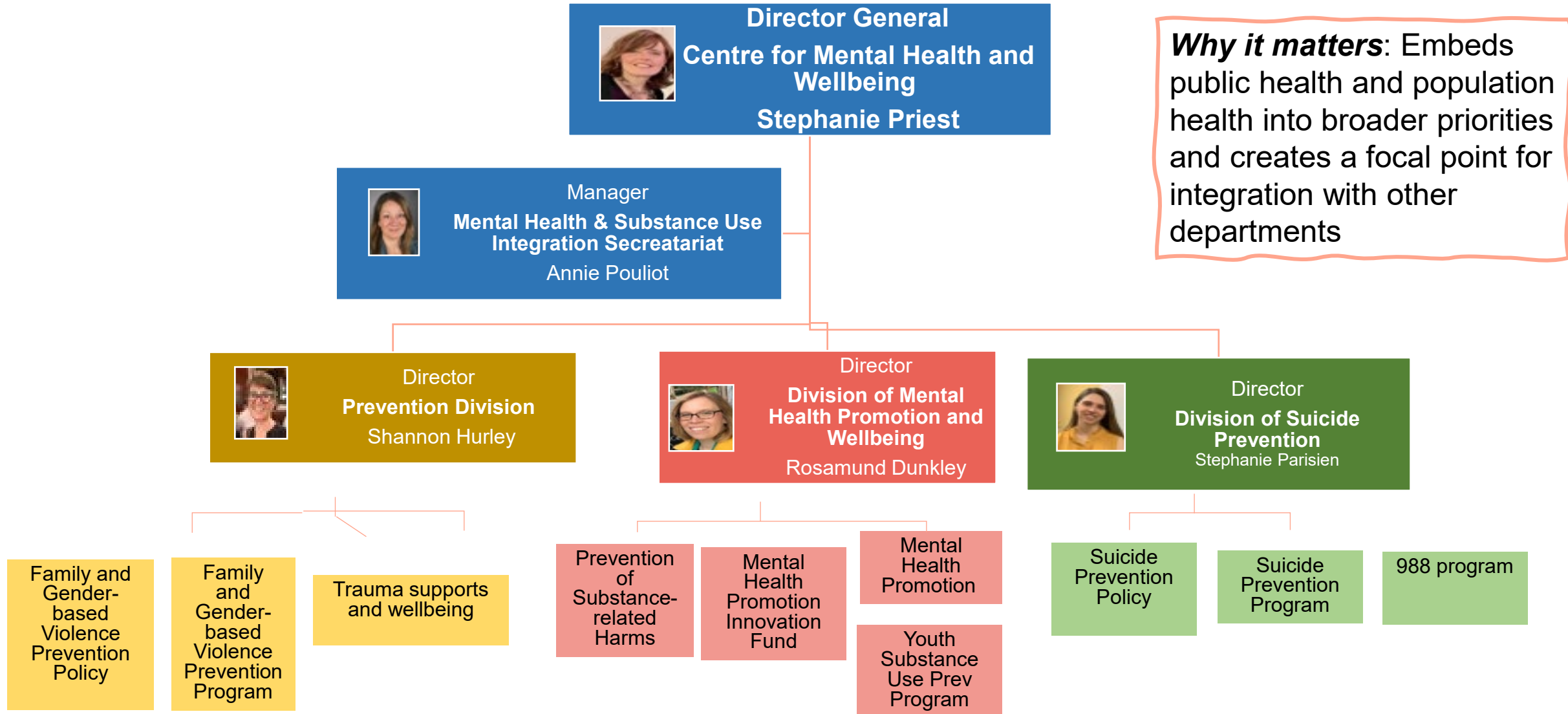
- Creation of the Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing at the Public Health Agency of Canada
- Greater collaboration with PTs – working group on wellbeing

Why this matters:

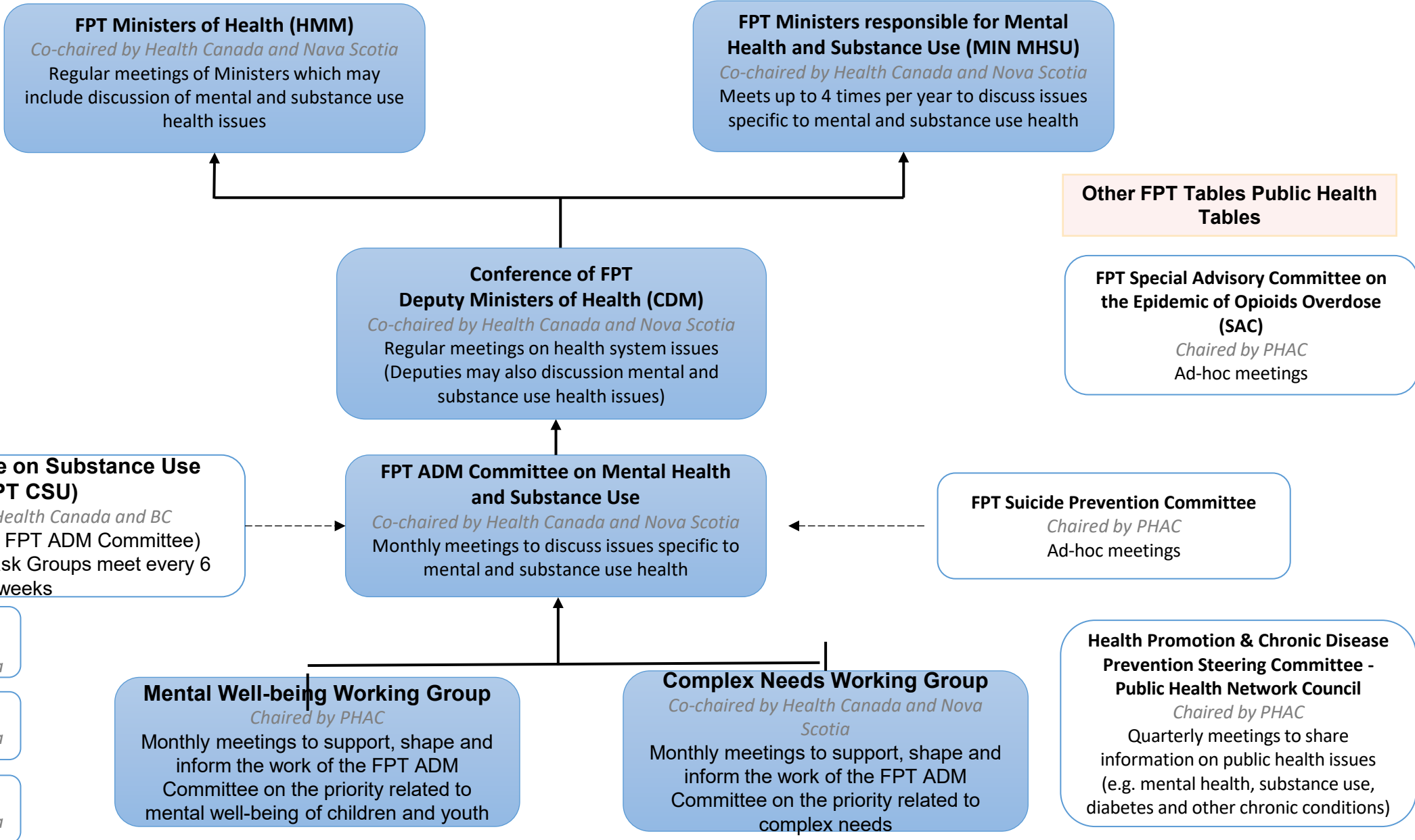
- Without it, mental health can get lost in the fray of all the other health priorities- and there are many.



The Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing



FPT Governance - Mental and Substance Use Health



Current federal priorities for mental health and substance use

Youth Mental Health

- The Youth Mental Health Fund will help younger Canadians access mental health care and help community organizations provide more care for younger Canadians. **Role for suicide prevention/life promotion and Integrated Youth Services.**

Suicide prevention

- National Suicide Prevention Action Plan will establish a vision, objectives and identify key areas for action for suicide prevention (spring 2024) – pillars for data, research, tools and governance, includes **life promotion**

Prevention of Substance-Related Harms

- The renewed Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy: public health and public safety strategy with the goal to minimize substance-related harms for individuals, families, and communities.- Includes adapting the Icelandic Prevention Model: **the Youth Substance Use Prevention Program** focused on building protective factors that promote overall health and well-being

PT Health System support

- A new set of bilateral funding agreements to address individual provincial and territorial health system needs.

Other PHAC Mental Health Promotion Priorities – *Building and strengthening partnerships*

Priorities

- ❖ **Building Community Resilience** as part of public health renewal
 - Includes focussing on social connectedness
- ❖ **Psycho-social supports for emergencies**
 - Includes climate change with a focus on mental health promotion,
- ❖ **Indigenous mental wellness** –
 - Includes supporting and building new relationships with partners

Potential Partners

- ❖ Education
- ❖ Sports and physical activity
- ❖ Local public health
- ❖ Research organizations – knowledge development and mobilization
- ❖ Universities- training, knowledge mobilization
- ❖ Communities/municipalities
- ❖ Provinces and Territories
- ❖ Indigenous Leaders

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- ❖ Lack of general awareness about mental health promotion – but getting better
- ❖ Continued focus on illness instead of a wellbeing --> but as previously, mental ill health can be used to "bring forward" mental health promotion
- ❖ Funding

Opportunities

- ❖ Renewal of key frameworks and strategies
- ❖ Potential new funding
- ❖ Best practice sharing with PT jurisdictions underway as part of the new mental health and wellbeing working group





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Thank-you

Stephanie Priest, Director General,
Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Branch

stephanie.priest@phac-aspc.gc.ca