

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network

ANNUAL REPORT: 2024/2025

Family Support - Education - Awareness and Advocacy

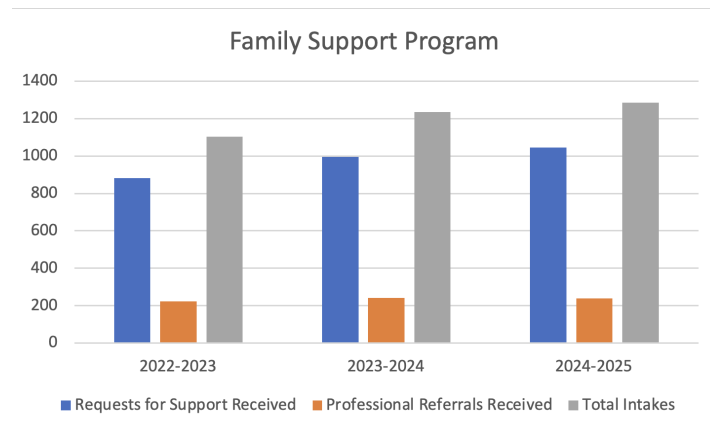


A big year for PAIL Network

We are grateful to the Ministry of Health for their continued support, and this year we were able to expand our program, thanks to an increase in funding. This funding made it possible to hire additional team members and allows us to take on new initiatives that will improve bereavement care across Ontario.

Family Support

Our peer support program continues to expand, with over 1300 referrals received this year. We are now offering in-person Circles of Support in 12 different communities, and have 14 different online group offerings. Our 1:1 phone support program provided over 800 sessions to grieving families all over the province.



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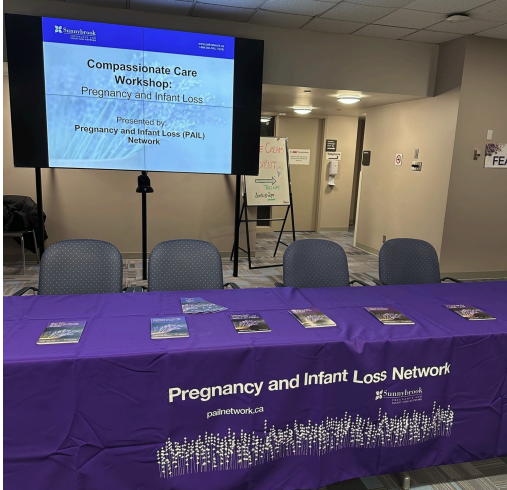
I really enjoyed this group. I thought the volunteers lead a good session and that it was easy for me to get time to talk about what was on my mind. I like that PAIL has a range of groups for whatever stage you are at.

@pailnetwork



We wouldn't be able to provide this support to bereaved families without our peer support volunteers- we trained and onboarded 67 new volunteers this year, all of whom have a lived experience of pregnancy and infant loss. Their volunteerism is the foundation of our family support program and we are so grateful they choose to share their hearts and time with PAIL Network.

Education for health and support professionals



Our Compassionate Care Workshop is a full day of learning, and this year we provided this education for over 700 professionals. We also hosted the first ever Simulation day at the Sunnybrook Canadian Simulation Centre for nurses to have the opportunity to practice their communication skills with families who experience pregnancy and infant loss. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the participants, and plan to explore other simulation experiences for professionals outside of the GTA to improve their ability to communicate with bereaved families in order to provide skilled and sensitive care. PAIL Network has supported two of our educators in the creation of an [Early Pregnancy Loss](#)

[Toolkit](#), designed to be used in a variety of healthcare spaces. This toolkit is downloadable, fully customizable, and provides resources for professionals as well as families to use when experiencing an early pregnancy loss. We recognize that pregnancy and infant loss affects a wide variety of professionals, and we have been providing paramedics with education that supports their ability to provide emergency care in a compassionate and sensitive way when a family has experienced pregnancy loss or infant death.

In an effort to increase the referrals we receive from professionals, PAIL Network has created a [script](#) that offers some guiding language, information about PAIL Network, and an overview of peer support. We have provided 34 information sessions to professionals across Ontario, and will look forward to continuing existing relationships and forming new ones in the coming year.

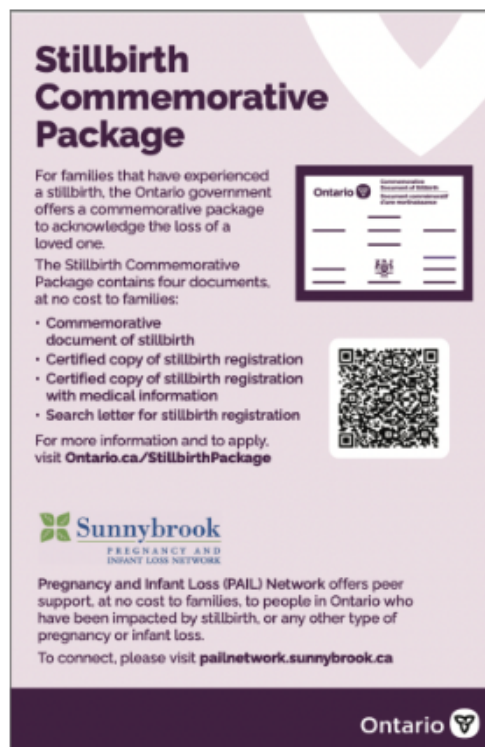
With a view to equity and accessibility, we are proud to now provide our informational brochures and posters in three Indigenous languages, on top of the other six languages we have available.

Awareness and Advocacy

On October 8, PAIL Network co-hosted a full day *Early Pregnancy Complications and Loss Workshop: Collaboration for Innovative Solutions and Implementation Pathways to Improve Care in Ontario* with the Provincial Council for Maternal and Child Health (PCMCH) and the Better Outcomes Registry and Network (BORN). The workshop brought together a diverse group of healthcare professionals, government representatives, and individuals with lived experience to develop actionable recommendations for system design and improvement. Presentations described how existing models

of care align with the recommendations set forth in the [Quality Standard for Early Pregnancy Complications and Loss: Care for Adults in All Settings](#) and identified gaps where improvements are needed. Read the [Summary Report for the Early Pregnancy Complications and Loss Workshop](#) for more information.

A transformative initiative that launched in October was the [Stillbirth Certificate package](#). One of our volunteers advocated tirelessly for this program to be offered in Ontario, gathering signatures from families and connecting with multiple government offices to request that families have access to this formal recognition of their baby. This partnership with PAIL Network and the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement allows families in Ontario who have experienced a stillbirth after 1944 to receive a certified copy of the stillbirth registration and a memorial certificate at no cost. Soon after this announcement was made, PAIL Network was able to support a woman who experienced the stillbirth of one of her twins in 1964 to apply for this certificate, and she was able to provide it to her surviving daughter. In her words, “I will be 90 this year so receiving this certificate would be the best present ever.” In further support of this initiative, PAIL Network was invited to provide training to call centre representatives at the Vital Events Registry Services Branch in order to ensure that bereaved families who connect with the Ministry to enquire about this package are provided with sensitive and compassionate communication during these interactions with government staff.



Stillbirth Commemorative Package

For families that have experienced a stillbirth, the Ontario government offers a commemorative package to acknowledge the loss of a loved one.

The Stillbirth Commemorative Package contains four documents, at no cost to families:

- Commemorative document of stillbirth
- Certified copy of stillbirth registration
- Certified copy of stillbirth registration with medical information
- Search letter for stillbirth registration

For more information and to apply, visit Ontario.ca/StillbirthPackage

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Pregnancy and Infant Loss (PAIL) Network offers peer support, at no cost to families, to people in Ontario who have been impacted by stillbirth, or any other type of pregnancy or infant loss.

To connect, please visit pailnetwork.sunnybrook.ca

Ontario



Wave of Light Events

Join PAIL Network on Tuesday, October 15, 2024 from 6:45 PM - 8 PM in these cities:

Atikokan	Hamilton	Sarnia
Belleville	Kenora	Stratford
Brantford	London	Thunder Bay
Brantford	Markham	Toronto
Dryden	Newmarket	Woodbridge/Vaughan
Georgetown	Port Perry	
Guelph	Red Lake	

For a full list of October 15 events in Ontario, visit pailnetwork.ca/events

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PAILNETWORK.CA

Every fall, PAIL Network provides families and professionals with awareness kits in preparation for Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day on October 15th. This year, PAIL Network sent over 5000 awareness kits to families and professionals in more than 142 different locations across Ontario, and welcomed more than 400 people to a “Wave of Light” event, either in person or virtually.



Our “Walk to Remember” is hosted the first Sunday in June, and this year we hosted over 1200 families to join together in remembrance of their babies.



Looking ahead to 2025/2026

We are excited to be hosting our second bi-annual conference, “Connected In Care” in September 2025 and will be welcoming speakers and participants from across Canada and the United States. This conference is the only Canadian conference that is solely focused on the care and support of families who experience pregnancy and infant loss and highlights the latest in research, innovation, and education.



PAIL Network plans to launch a new campaign for healthcare professionals to offer guidance around communication with families. This campaign is called “TLC: Tell, Listen, Connect” and will provide a document along with a quick reference card that can be added to a lanyard that outlines ways to communicate with families that will allow for information to be shared, encourages attunement with the family, and reminds professionals to connect families with psychosocial support.



Other projects will include:

- Increasing education for students
- Educational video with paramedics and families who have experienced sudden infant death
- Implementation of a new online platform for volunteer onboarding and training
- Exploration of a PAIL Network app
- National Community of Practice for pregnancy and infant loss
- Embedding Indigenous teachings into education, family support, and awareness opportunities
- Consultation with organizations to pilot the development of quality improvement projects in bereavement care programs across Ontario

Thank you to all of our partners and supporters for your ongoing connection and collaboration-together, we can make lasting improvements to bereavement care in Ontario.
