Appendix 3: Future Evaluation and Research Programs

The following suggestions for future studies were extracted from the literature, interviews and focus group discussions with key informants and discussions with officials from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Ministry of Children and Youth Services as well as from discussions among the members of the research team.

Suggestions for future evaluation and research studies

- Conduct a feasibility study/pilot test of the use of tele-mental health services in Family Health Teams (FHTs) using selected FHTs in rural and urban areas, in northern and southern Ontario.
    - What are the characteristics of successful pilot projects and do they differ in important ways from the characteristics of other successful telehealth projects?
    - Who delivers the tele-mental health services and how does this differ among FHTs?
    - How are differences between rural and urban or north versus south related to the success of tele-mental health projects?
    - What constitutes a successful tele-mental health service?
    - What are the lessons for the role-out of tele-mental health to other FHTs?
    - What performance indicators should be monitored during role-out?
    - Who should record and who should monitor these indicators?
    - Which indicators should trigger action on the part of the FHT, government ministries or other stakeholders?
    - Who are the other stakeholders and what is the nature of their involvement?

- Develop specific performance indicators that could be used to monitor or evaluate tele-mental health in Family Health Team (FHT) settings
    - How do differences in FHTs (number, expertise and availability of providers) and environments (populations served, geographic location, etc.) affect use and performance?
        - Indicators may be needed for: (a) patient and provider satisfaction/willingness-to-use; (b) access/availability; (c) utilization; (d) integration; (e) financial impact; (f) technical service; and (g) quality of care.

- Develop benchmarks for these performance indicators.

- Monitor the role-out of tele-mental health services to FHTs in the area of technological factors, human factors and the technology-human interaction.
    - What is the usefulness of performance indicators assessed against the burden of collecting and monitoring the data?
    - Which indicators should be measured after roll-out?
    - Who should record and who should monitor these indicators?
    - Which indicators should trigger action on the part of the FHT, government ministries or other stakeholders?

- Examine the <u>process</u> of integration of tele-mental health into FHTs.
    - How do differences in FHTs and environments affect the process and nature of integration into FHTs?
    - How are tele-mental health services integrated with other health care and social care services?
    - How are tele-mental health services integrated with other telehealth services?

- Monitor the type of use and frequency of use of tele-mental health services and of telehealth services in FHTs.
    - What types of services are offered and who provides these services?
    - Which services are used, how often and by whom?
    - Are the tele-mental health services reaching the intended populations?
    - What is the relationship between tele-mental health utilization and telehealth utilization?

- After roll-out is complete, compare tele-mental health use in urban versus rural FHTs or in northern versus southern Ontario and examine factors influencing any difference in use.
    - What are the important differences/similarities for rural versus urban and northern versus southern Ontario FHTs?
    - How are these differences related to type of use and frequency of use of tele-mental health services?

- Design studies to conduct short-term evaluations focusing on performance and process indicators and long-term evaluations focusing on outcomes. Studies should share common methodologies and tools whenever possible.

The proposed evaluation/research programs reflect different perspectives or emphasis but may overlap in terms of approach and methodologies. The next steps may be to select and clarify the main and subsidiary evaluation/research questions and then develop the appropriate methods and evaluation/research instruments.