

Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan Newsletter

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In 2014, the Government of Saskatchewan endorsed the 10-year Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan. This newsletter provides updates on the progress on the Action Plan, and highlights improvement activities currently underway.

The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan (MHAAP) encourages new ways of thinking and working together to address the 46 recommendations, while recognizing the good work already occurring in communities across Saskatchewan.

Since its release, the Action Plan's Vision and Guiding Principles have continued to be at the forefront of work that is occurring, within the Ministry of Health, and across our partner ministries, including Social Services, Justice and Education.

Ministries are working together to advance:

- Appropriate and Coordinated Care;
- Improved Transitions;
- Emergency and Crisis Supports; and
- Supportive and Independent living.

Ongoing progress is made possible by cross-ministry collaborations and the work happening in the community with the common goal to improve the lives of people facing mental health and addictions challenges.

The contributions of the patient and family advisors, as well as other stakeholders who are part of the MHAAP Reference Committee, provide an important perspective, ensuring we

Quick fact:

Our health system offers a range of mental health and addictions services in communities across Saskatchewan.

are always putting the patient first in our ongoing work under the Action Plan.

The MHAAP will continue to guide our direction and help set the priority areas for improving mental health and addictions services in Saskatchewan.

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Mental Health First Aid training provided to more than 1700 people across the province

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training supports the recommendations of the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan to provide front line providers across sectors with targeted and relevant education about mental health and addictions issues, and improving responses to individuals living with or developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

Since 2015-16, the Government of Saskatchewan has invested \$250,000 into MHFA training, and as of September 2017, 1,784 people in Saskatchewan have received MHFA training by a provincially funded facilitator.

MHFA provides practical training to people who may come into contact with individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis or addictions issue. The course, which is offered regularly across the province, is under the leadership of the Mental Health Commission of Canada curriculum. It uses the foundation of first responder “first aid” to teach people how to provide better responses and support to individuals with mental health or addictions issues, and make appropriate referrals during initial interventions (including effective treatments and ways to find professional help).

MHFA Basic was first offered by provincially funded facilitators in 2015. Due to its initial success, a wider roll-out has been implemented across Saskatchewan. Facilitators in Mental Health First Aid - First Nations have been added, and beginning in fall 2017, Mental Health First Aid - Adults who

Interact with Youth will be available.

MHFA training is available to anyone over the age of 16. Participants don't need any knowledge of mental health or formal training to take the course. People who have completed the training include those involved in education, health care, law enforcement, emergency response, housing, community-based organizations, parents, and other adults or caregivers. If you're interested in taking the Mental Health First Aid training in your community, please visit the Mental Health First Aid website for more information.

***Please note that Mental Health First Aid does not provide therapy or skills to diagnose.**

<http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca>

<http://learn.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca/courses?locale=en&location=SK>



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

Mental Health
First Aid Canada 



MHFA - FIRST NATIONS: KYRHA Suicide-Prevention Worker Ashley Norton (left) and Addiction Counsellor Amanda Petit (right) pose with their Mental Health First Aid - First Nations certificates in December, as KYRHA Mental Health and Addictions Director Byrne Richards looks on.

HealthLine 811 offers accessible mental health and addictions support in Saskatchewan

A mental health or addictions crisis can happen anytime, anywhere. Confidential help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, just by picking up the phone and dialing 811.

Every month, HealthLine 811 fields an average of 6,716 health related calls from across the province; that's more than 80,000 calls a year. Saskatchewan is unique in offering mental health and addictions services by phone through HealthLine 811.

HealthLine 811 employs registered psychiatric nurses, registered nurses and social workers who can offer crisis support and strategies to someone in a mental health crisis, or give someone suffering from mental health or addictions issues information about resources in their community.

Callers are able to discuss concerns in a safe, caring and confidential manner. This service is making help more accessible, and ensuring that no matter where they are located, callers have someone to talk to and guide them to the help they need.

HealthLine 811 also offers the Maternal Wellness Program, which provides easier access to help for women who struggle with postpartum depression and anxiety, or feelings of loss following a miscarriage, stillbirth or death of a newborn. The Maternal Wellness Program was launched in August

2013 and supports the MHAAP recommendation to strengthen access to maternal mental health supports. All new mothers are now screened by a public health nurse during their postnatal visits for their risk of developing depression and/or anxiety. If a client is referred to the program, a HealthLine 811 registered psychiatric nurse or social worker follows up with them by telephone at their convenience; conducting assessments and offering support until they can see their primary care provider or a mental health clinician, or when the client shows improvement and support is no longer needed. HealthLine 811 services are intended to offer support to the client in addition to their regularly scheduled service from a primary healthcare provider and/or mental health clinician in their region.

Between March 2016 and March 2017, the Maternal Wellness Program served more than 360 Saskatchewan women.

Read more about the impact of this program in Pam Cowan's article from the Regina Leader-Post [Maternal Wellness Program is a 'lifeline' for Saskatchewan women](#).

Anyone with a physical or mental health concern can call HealthLine 811 for advice anytime. People can also access HealthLine online at www.healthlineonline.ca for more interactive health tools and decision aids.



Did you know..

- HealthLine 811 is confidential.
- HealthLine 811 answers calls 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.
- HealthLine 811 is free of charge.
- HealthLine 811 can offer translation in over 100 languages.
- HealthLine 811 and healthlineonline.ca can guide individuals to the mental health and addictions help they need.

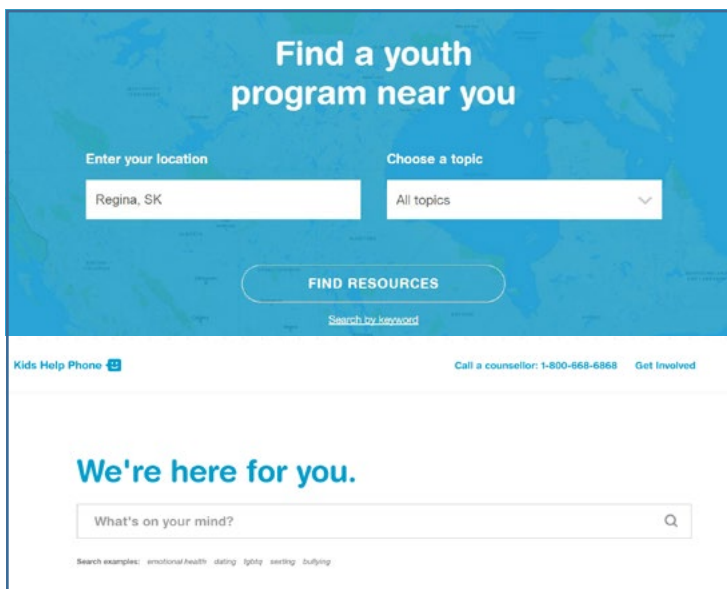
Counsellor in the Classroom - Increasing Mental Health Awareness and Promoting Positive Help-Seeking Attitudes

Creating a safe and supportive environment for young people can have a lasting impact on their lives and their communities. The Government of Saskatchewan and Kids Help Phone have been working together to improve the emotional well-being of young people.

Since 2014 the province has partnered with Kids Help Phone to deliver “Counsellor in the Classroom”, with a focus on middle year classrooms and teachers. The program offers resources and dedicated learning sessions to students by connecting with one of Kids Help Phone’s professional counsellors.

Over the past three years, the program has:

- Engaged students in discussion and developed awareness of mental health and well-being;
- Demystified the process of asking for help and promoted help-seeking behaviours; and
- Provided valuable information about Kids Help Phone’s telephone and online service.



The screenshot shows the Kids Help Phone website interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the text "Find a youth program near you". Below this, there are two input fields: "Enter your location" with "Regina, SK" entered, and "Choose a topic" with "All topics" selected. A "FIND RESOURCES" button is visible below these fields. Below the button, there is a "Search by keyword" field with the placeholder text "What's on your mind?". At the bottom of the search field, there are search examples: "emotional health", "dating", "gabby", "sexting", and "bullying".

The program has provided valuable mental health information and up to date resources to students at an important stage of their life. Students who participated in Counsellor in the Classroom reported feeling more confident in knowing how to access services in times of need and knew where to go for help. Counsellor in the Classroom helps young people understand the importance of help-seeking while promoting resources that provide mental health support in their communities.

Kids Help Phone continues to provide an important service in Saskatchewan. This project also helps educators, allies and trusted adults to promote and support the emotional well-being of students by providing greater insight into available resources.

Counsellor in the Classroom supports the recommendation of the Mental Health and Action Plan on prevention and early intervention, and increasing awareness of mental health and addictions issues in children and youth via programs and services for emotional and social health delivered in school.

Counsellor in the Classroom also reduces stigma and encourages social acceptability of seeking help – an important step in improving the mental well-being of young people across the province.

Kids Help Phone is a charity that provides Canada’s only anonymous and confidential counselling service for youth and young people, 24 hours a day, seven days a week in English and French. Service is available by phone or online and offers a bridge for young people and communities to link directly to local supports through a comprehensive resource database

To learn more about Kids Help Phone, please visit kidshelpphone.ca.

If you are a young person struggling with a problem big or small, please call 1-800-668-6868. Kids Help Phone is available, 24/7/365.

If you’re interested in Counsellor in the Classroom sessions, please contact jessica.tiefenbach@kidshelpphone.ca.

Program having a lasting im-PACT

The Police and Crisis Team (PACT) program has been recognized as an innovative approach to better identify people who need help before their situation becomes a crisis – and when a true crisis happens, connecting them to the most appropriate services rather than a potential trip to the emergency room or police cells.

In 2014, the Ministries of Health and Justice launched the PACT pilot in partnership with the Saskatoon Health Region and the Saskatoon Police Service. The program pairs a police officer with a mental health worker to attend calls related to people who may be experiencing an addictions or mental health crisis.

The goals of PACT are to provide:

- More appropriate care for individuals who are better served in the community Emergency Departments;
- Reduce inappropriate presentations to emergency departments and within the criminal justice system; and
- Improve community safety.

PACT also directly responds to recommendation 7.3 of the MHAAP: support police efforts to improve responses to situations involving individuals with mental health and addictions issues, including police partnering with mental health workers in crisis teams.

Given the success of the PACT pilot in Saskatoon, it was expanded to Regina in 2016. In September 2017, the Regina Police Service in collaboration with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, further expanded the program.

By the numbers

In 2016, from April to December, there were **719** situations/referrals. **162** of these were diverted from the Emergency Department.



500 Saskatoon referrals -
114 avoided the ED



219 Regina referrals -
48 avoided the ED

Saskatoon (7 day a week program with 10 hour shifts)

Regina (5 day a week program with 8 hours shifts)

The Ministry of Health provides funding through the Emergency Department Waits and Patient Flow Initiative, which aims to equip the health system to adopt a more patient- and family-centred approach to directing people to the right care, at the right time.

PACT is also supported by the Ministry of Justice Policing and Community Safety Services. This unit is mandated to help keep communities safe and maintain public order in Saskatchewan. This is done by ensuring that effective policing and private security programs uphold the rule of law and protect the rights of individuals.

For more stories about the PACT program:

PACT team: Help at the end of the line by Pam Cowan, Regina Leader-Post, June 28, 2017 <http://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/pact-team-help-at-the-end-of-the-line>

Saskatoon police PACT program saving courts, hospitals money, Global News Saskatoon, February 17, 2017. <http://globalnews.ca/news/3256097/saskatoon-police-pact-program-saving-courts-hospitals-money/>

385 custody and community staff of the Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing have participated in mental health training related to Understanding and Responding to Adults and Youth.

Improvements Implemented

- In December 2016, a Provincial Drug Task Force was established to address the ongoing issues related to opioid drug misuse and overdose. The task force, co-lead by the Ministries of Health and Justice, brings together stakeholder groups to discuss the issue of drug misuse, and how to work collectively to respond to this issue.
- A Youth Mental Health Services Mapping Event took place in Mamawetan Churchill River Health Region in March 2017. The outcomes from the mapping event include a focus on prevention (bullying), partnership between the health region and Lac La Ronge Indian Band to recognize high risk children, the use of social media to inform frontline workers and the community about stigma reduction techniques for mental health and addictions.
- As of July 1, 2017, people in Saskatchewan who need support to address problematic alcohol use now have access to another form of treatment. The Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan now provides coverage for two drug products for the treatment of alcohol use disorder: Revia (naltrexone) and Campral (acamprosate). The addition of these drugs to the Formulary helps primary health care providers fulfil their vital role as first contact and ongoing support for individuals with mental health and addictions issues. It also supports recommendation #8.5 which speaks to reducing the harms associated with alcohol misuse.
- In January 2017 Suboxone was also added to the Formulary for the treatment of opioid abuse. These pharmacological interventions expand the tools available to physicians in Saskatchewan to manage and treat addictions.
- The Take Home Naloxone Program has distributed more than 314 kits and provided education and training to 920 individuals

- The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has invested in 275 new housing units, creating safe and stable housing options to support people living with mental health and addictions issues.

Other Developments

- The Government of Canada will invest \$1.2 million over two years to develop two mental wellness teams in the communities of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and Lac La Ronge Indian Band. This funding will increase capacity for training to ensure services are provided in a culturally safe manner.
- Under a Canada-Saskatchewan Health Funding Agreement announced on January 17, 2017, the federal government will provide Saskatchewan with up to \$158.5 million over the next 10 years to support mental health and addictions initiatives. In August, the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Health agreed to a Common Statement of Principles on Shared Health Priorities – guiding principles for this funding.

There is still planning work to be done between the Federal government and the provinces and territories to outline how this funding will be used to be consistent with the Common Statement of Principles, and to develop common indicators to assess progress.

Saskatchewan's approach to the federal funding will align with the MHAAP.

For a more information on mental health and addictions issues, including how to access supports, visit:

- saskatchewan.ca/health
- HealthLine Online at healthlineonline.ca
- Or call HealthLine 811. Specially trained staff are available 24 hours a day to provide mental health and addictions crisis support, in a safe and confidential manner.

