The 2019 Election Toolkit was created by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division

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Welcome to the Canadian Mental Health Association Election 2019 Tool Kit. The Tool Kit has been designed to provide you with materials to support your efforts in advocating for better mental health outcomes in Alberta.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Alberta Division is happy to be a voice advocating for the mental health of all Albertans during the provincial election of 2019. This election, we hope you make mental health a priority and discuss with your candidates the importance of mental health, mental illness and addictions services in your community.

We are grateful for the operational expertise of CMHA’s nine affiliate regions throughout Alberta. Opportunities and projects of provincial scope have come into focus through active engagement with the Government of Alberta and other provincial partners. These partnerships demonstrate strong connections between CMHA in Alberta and the needs represented by Albertans.

Typically, tool kits focus on three to four key messages. Mental health has become a topic of interest in Alberta among policy makers and the broad spectrum of sectors representing all Albertans. This has created a need for a broader set of key messages because of the pervasive nature of mental illness and addictions within our population.

Many pages in this tool kit can be copied and used as one-pagers to leave behind with candidates and community members. We encourage you to pick and choose, copy and paste, select and reformat the information contained in this kit to help you support better mental health outcomes for all Albertans.

If you would like citations for the information provided, or would like more information on CMHA in Alberta, please contact alberta@cmha.ab.ca.

David Grauwiler

Executive Director, CMHA Alberta Division
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      People in a Healthy Society
Province-wide, the Government of Alberta must... 

...acknowledge and act on the chronic underfunding of mental health services in Alberta. Based on a health-equity spending approach, spending targets for mental health and addictions should approach 12-13% of the total health budget.

In Alberta, 6% (estimated) of the provincial health budget is spent on mental health and addictions. There is some variability on how this number is calculated; however, current spending by the Government of Alberta is not in line with other jurisdictions and must be increased.

...adopt a health-equity (parity) lens, placing mental health on the same standing of importance as physical health.

Chronic underfunding of mental health care is creating an environment for a two-tier system to emerge. The Government of Alberta must promote open access to all; investment is needed to guard our public system. For more information, read the CMHA Health Parity paper found on the CMHA Alberta Division website.

...acknowledge and act on the need for cross-ministry investments to promote positive mental health.

The mental health of our population affects everyone’s quality of life. All Government of Alberta Ministries have a role to play, not just the Health Ministry.
Going Deeper into the Key Messages

The following pages take a deeper look at the Key Messages and connect them to the following approaches to mental health and mental illness and addictions:

The Whole of Government
The Whole of Society
The Whole of Lifespan
Mental health and mental illness

Whole of Life Approaches

All Albertans have mental health. Any Albertan at any age can face a mental health or addiction challenge.
Mental health and mental illness

Whole of Life Approaches

All Albertans have mental health. Any Albertan at any age can face a mental health or addiction challenge.

“Better systems – not more navigators

The Government of Alberta must support development and access to integrated and improved systems, like stepped care, across the lifespan.

In 2017, Albertans made almost 1 million appointments to discuss their mental health concerns with a doctor. Community care is a key element of our system. Clearly, primary care, clinical care and community mental health need greater coordination.

Internationally, mental health service delivery is moving towards a stepped care approach, that is, an approach which offers the right level of care at the right point in time for the person in need. This is an evidence-based system comprising of a hierarchy of interventions, from the least to the most intensive.

In a stepped care model, service delivery is defined by four core elements:

- A range of needs—which change over time—exist within a population.
- A spectrum of interventions is available to meet different needs.
- A person accessing mental health services receives a level of intervention that meets current needs and preferences.
- A person enters the system and accesses a service that aligns with needs and choice.

A key element of stepped care is how people enter into the system. In Alberta, CMHA has advocated for provincial coverage of 211 information services, where people can call at any time of the day or night for system navigation and support. This single source approach for information and referrals is an example of government supporting a coordinated systems approach.

“A person-centered philosophy with a focus on needs, engagement and participation is a characteristic of effective system integration. Understanding the experiences of people who need to access services is central to creating system change.”

–Here to Help, BC Partners for Mental Health and Substance Use
CHILDREN AND YOUTH MUST BE A PRIORITY – EARLY INTERVENTIONS ARE MOST COST EFFECTIVE

The Government of Alberta must continue to invest in child and youth mental health through community and school-based supports and services.

Youth ages 12 to 24 are among the most underserved population in regard to mental health and addictions in Alberta. CMHA in Alberta, along with other partners, has submitted grant requests to the ministries of Children’s Services and Health for investments to match philanthropic investment. This would allow for the further development of local Integrated Youth Service Delivery Hubs throughout the province. The expansion of these evidence-based, youth-friendly integrated service sites will empower youth in communities across the province to access mental health and addiction services.

In Alberta, Alberta Health Services (AHS) school-based Mental Health Capacity Builders program provides support to students within their learning environments. Additionally, the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative provides resources and science exploring early brain development and its connection to lifelong physical and mental health, including addiction.

“There is strong evidence that promotion, prevention and early intervention targeted at children and families can produce significant net cost benefits.”

–Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health, Mental Health Commission of Canada
Suicide prevention work must continue

The Government of Alberta must continue to invest in suicide prevention.

In 2015, the Valuing Mental Health report stated the need to “identify suicide prevention as a priority and sustain funding and leadership through mandating the Addiction and Mental Health Implementation Team to coordinate activities and interventions across Alberta to support individuals, families and communities in addressing this issue (Recommendation 22-25).”

We are seeing more momentum in suicide prevention than ever before. Alberta Health and Alberta Children’s Services have joined social service and health non-profit organizations, as well as AHS, to do this important work, and it is imperative that this work continues.

For 38 years, the Centre for Suicide Prevention, a branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association has been driving the suicide prevention agenda and has been working with the government on this important agenda item.

“637 people died by suicide in Alberta in 2017. That’s more than double the number of Albertans who died in motor vehicle accidents in 2016.”

– Vital Statistics, 2018
MENTAL HEALTH OF SENIORS – AN EMERGING PRIORITY

As our population ages, the Government of Alberta must see the mental health of senior citizens as a clear priority.

Alberta’s senior population is growing faster than any other age group. As of April 2018, over 575,000 Albertans are over the age of 65, and that number is expected to double within the next two decades.

Depression and social isolation are critical mental health issues faced by Alberta’s senior population.

In our province, CMHA is a partner in offering Mental Health First Aid for Seniors training to more than 1,000 Albertans. This initiative, under the Valuing Mental Health umbrella of funding, is an example of the Government of Alberta prioritizing seniors mental health and addictions.

“The mental health of older adults can be improved through promoting active and healthy ageing. Mental health-specific health promotion for older adults involves creating living conditions and environments that support wellbeing and allow people to lead a healthy life. Promoting mental health depends largely on strategies to ensure that older people have the necessary resources to meet their needs.”

–The World Health Organization

Mental health and mental illness

Whole of Life Approaches

All Albertans have mental health. Any Albertan at any age can face a mental health or addiction challenge.
SUPPORT FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS

The Government of Alberta must acknowledge the essential role caregivers and peers play in the recovery of mental illness and it is critical families, direct supporters and peers are provided with the skills and resources they need to be effective.

Families and other caregivers play a critical role in supporting individuals diagnosed with mental illness. Early detection and successful recovery from mental illness happens best in a coordination between clinical services and supporting families and caregivers.

There is a need for long term, affordable and supportive housing for adults who live with the effects of serious/persistent mental illness. Additionally, changes to legislation must encourage a culture of education and involvement of families.

In six communities across Alberta, CMHA offers Caregiver Connections, a peer support group for families and caregivers. This program connects families and caregivers to each other, community resources and much needed peer support.

“According to Statistics Canada… [mental illness caregivers account for] 7% [of all caregivers]… Caregiving does not come without a cost. Many carers (41%) use their personal savings to cover unexpected costs, and spend $100 to $300 per month on expenses directly related to their caregiving responsibilities.”

-Caregiver Strategy, Carers Canada

Mental health and mental illness

Whole of Life Approaches

All Albertans have mental health. Any Albertan at any age can face a mental health or addiction challenge.

Canadian Mental Health Association
Alberta
Mental health for all
Mental health and mental illness

Whole of Society Approaches

Positive mental health flourishes in healthy communities.
MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION—LOW COST FOR HIGH RETURNS

The Government of Alberta must increase funding for mental health. In particular, upstream approaches to a mentally healthy society, such as coping-skills development and mental health promotion activities.

Early intervention and education can reduce overall demands on the health care system. Investments made in community-level programs strengthen mental health and wellbeing across the population.

In Alberta, disparate mental health promotion activities undertaken provincially lack strategic coordination. Public education is fragmented between providers such as Alberta Health Services, CMHA and other not-for-profits with little to no harmonization.

CMHA in Alberta, through its nine regional offices, offers mental health promotion across the province. In many cases, the Government of Alberta does not fund this crucial and effective community level work.

“We know that promotion, prevention and early intervention targeted at children and families can produce significant net cost benefits, such as through parent education and family support.”

—Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health
Mental Health Commission of Canada
INVEST IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – GIVE COMMUNITIES AN OPPORTUNITY TO IDENTIFY WHAT MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SUPPORTS THEY NEED

The Government of Alberta must invest in community development strategies for rural, remote and Indigenous communities. This approach will improve access and supports related to mental health and addictions in these underserved communities.

Accessing addiction and mental health services is challenging, especially in rural and remote areas. Frequently individuals must travel long distances to receive treatment and support for mental health and addictions. Sadly, some choose not to seek help as a result of these barriers. As much as possible, individuals should be able to receive services within their communities.

CMHA Alberta’s Rural Mental Health project is a community development project focused on the development of local mental health community action plans in 150 communities across the province. This work demonstrates development focused on community-identified needs and solutions.

“A social determinants of mental health approach that includes the life-course perspective would require long-term and sustained policies that focus on reducing inequalities in health through community development, capacity building, partnerships, and local institution building across the life-course.”

–Social Determinants of Mental Health, World Health Organization
**IMPROVE ACCESS AND SERVICES – INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES ARE CHRONICALLY UNDERSERVED**


First Nations, Métis, and Inuit and communities in Alberta encounter unique circumstances, challenges, needs and opportunities. Many of the addiction and mental health issues faced by Indigenous populations are rooted in historical and intergenerational trauma, socio-economic inequalities and discrimination.

Currently, there is strategic development and investment in improved mental health and addictions outcomes for Indigenous communities undertaken through Valuing Mental Health. Indigenous engagement working-groups and projects are funded by Alberta Health. Greater cross-ministry involvement will help amplify this work.

“Services need to respond to the unique needs of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and communities, and the increasing diversity in our province. Out of this awareness emerged the priority of better meeting the needs of all Albertans, regardless of culture, geography, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.”

The Government of Alberta must support and promote recovery-oriented practice including peer support and Recovery Colleges.

CMHA Recovery Colleges and Peer Support Training are providing recovery support for thousands of Albertans each year. Valuing Mental Health grant funding is currently supporting a limited expansion of Recovery Colleges in Alberta. The basis for successful Recovery Colleges is training, equipping and supporting individuals with lived experience. Individuals with lived experience transcend traditional barriers between those seeking help and those offering support. Continued funding will be required to bring the innovative psycho-social learning environment of Recovery College and the development of peer support training to more Alberta communities.

“Peer support programs can help alleviate some of the pressure on Canada’s strained healthcare system by reducing not only the need for hospitalization, but also the emotional distress experienced by patients. They also help people develop the skills they need to take charge of their lives. Yet despite these benefits, peer support is still undervalued by the mental health community... People can experience great improvements in their lives through relatively small investments in peer support but growing and sustaining such initiatives requires adequate funding.”

–Mental Health Commission of Canada
CONTINUE TO ADDRESS ALBERTA’S OPIOID CRISIS

The Government of Alberta must continue to address the provincial opioid crisis by providing resources and funding towards effective initiatives.

The Government of Alberta has declared a public health crisis in response to the increasing number of deaths due to opioid overdoses in the province. In 2017, the province committed to spending an additional $30 million and setting up a 14-member commission to address the issue.

In May 2017, the Government of Alberta created the new Minister’s Opioid Emergency Response Commission, under the Opioid Emergency Response Regulation in the Public Health Act. The commission will oversee and implement priority actions on the opioid crisis, focused on six strategic areas:

- Harm-reduction initiatives
- Treatment
- Prevention
- Enforcement and supply control
- Collaboration
- Surveillance and analytics

“In response to surveillance data that showed a further increase in the number of fentanyl-related deaths, the [Government of Alberta] Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health began leading the urgent opioid response in October 2016 and implemented a range of new tools to address overdoses and deaths related to fentanyl and other opioids.”

-Opioid Reports, The Government of Alberta
Mental health and mental illness

Whole of Government Approaches

All ministries have a stake in the mental health of Albertans. Mental health and addictions are more than a “health” matter.
Mental health and mental illness

Whole of Government Approaches

All ministries have a stake in the mental health of Albertans. Mental health and addictions are more than a “health” matter.

ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACT ON THE CHRONIC UNDERFUNDING OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND ADDICTION TREATMENT IN ALBERTA

The Government of Alberta must support a health-equity approach. Based on this approach, spending targets for mental health and addictions funding should approach 12-13% of the total health budget.

Over the last several years, governments at different levels across the country have made investments in mental health and addiction services, supports and programs for their respective communities. Yet, in spite of this, evidence shows we are not meeting the needs of all Canadians. Programs and services are not as effective as they could be and there are still long wait times for people to get the care they urgently need.

In Alberta, approximately 6% of the provincial health budget is spent on mental health and addictions. Current spending by the Government of Alberta is not in line with other jurisdictions and must be increased.

“In Canada, the estimated $15.8 billion spent by the public and private sectors in 2015 on non-dementia-related mental health care represented approximately 7.2% of Canada’s total health spending ($219.1 billion). This spending is well below that of other western countries. By comparison, the National Health Service in England spends 13% of its health spending on a similar set of services (OECD, 2014).”

~Strengthening the Case for Investing in Canada’s Mental Health System; Economic Considerations, Mental Health Commission of Canada
ADOPT A HEALTH-EQUITY (PARITY) LENS, MAKING MENTAL HEALTH AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH

Counselling services are out of reach for many Albertans; few publicly-funded counselling services exist. Most people who receive counselling are relying on their private insurance or pay directly. This is not the case in other provinces. The Government of Alberta needs to do better to avoid fostering a two-tier system.

Up to 80% of Canadians rely on their family physicians to meet their mental health and addictions care needs. Evidence-based health care is the foundation of the mental health and addictions response in other G7 countries, but these services are not guaranteed through Alberta’s public system. Consequently, Canadians spend $950 million on counselling services each year—30% of it out of pocket.

In Alberta, access to publicly funded mental health and addictions supports are limited and impacted by long wait times. This situation precludes thousands of Albertans from accessing the help they need when they need it. This situation creates greater jeopardy especially for children and youth.

“In Canada, it’s encouraging that some provincial governments are beginning to invest more in psychological services…but we know that universal access for Canadians will require commitments from all provinces and territories to fund and improve services and establish a national standard.”

–CMHA Mental health in the balance: ending the health care disparity in Canada, Canadian Mental Health Association
Mental health and mental illness

Whole of Government Approaches

All ministries have a stake in the mental health of Albertans. Mental health and addictions are more than a “health” matter.

ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACT ON THE NEED FOR CROSS-MINISTRY INVESTMENTS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Given the widespread population impacts of mental illness, addictions and wellbeing, the Government of Alberta must explore some structural considerations to elevate the profile for addiction and mental health issues internally.

In Alberta, the Valuing Mental Health Next Steps report identifies an Executive Steering Committee. This committee consists of Government of Alberta Deputy Ministers, executive leadership of Alberta Health Services and Health Canada’s First Nations and Inuit Health Branch. It exists as part of the governance structure in support of implementing the report recommendations, which was a promising first step. Cross-ministry approaches to system improvement, including the blending of funding from multiple ministries, would be evidence this approach is working.

“Over the coming years, multiple ministries and service agencies will be working closely together to better link our services to meet the needs of individuals and families. We recognize that a stronger cross-government approach is needed, working closely with clients, families, service partners, stakeholders and communities to incorporate their perspectives as we develop and improve our services and system –building on a strong foundation of cross-sectoral collaboration”

–B.C’s Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy 2017-2020
Appendix

Election Toolkit 2019
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is a national, community mental health organization reaching across Canada and focuses on the mental health and wellbeing of all Canadians. CMHA is recognized as a reliable source for information, support and compassionate understanding of those living with mental illness and the families, friends and communities who support them. We work at the intersection of clinical and community mental health care.

For more than 60 years in Alberta, CMHA has focused on recovery and support. We serve all Albertans impacted by mental illness and addiction; provide family support; promote mental health; and educate on a community level. We stand with people living in the community as they achieve their wellness goals. Hundreds of CMHA staff and volunteers engage clients in activity and navigation within the complex matrix of mental health services.

CMHA is a leader in community-based mental health, offering a recovery-focused and wellness approach to service delivery. All of our programs and services focus on promoting good mental health and early intervention, creating supportive and inclusive communities and providing people with the opportunities and skills to live well and independently.

CMHA Regional and Divisional organizations have developed a network across the province to share and scale mental health service models, education and backbone supports to increase access to programs, services and supports. The CMHA Alberta network is focused on a collaborative leadership team leveraging an investment that builds on over $25 million in service delivery and supports that have been in Alberta for over 50 years.

All Albertans have mental health and many will experience mental illness. CMHA is an active community partner, supporting mental health promotion, education, peer support and recovery activities to the benefit of all.

“Mentally Healthy People in a Healthy Society”
–CMHA vision statement

About the Canadian Mental Health Association

“Mentally Healthy People in a Healthy Society”
–CMHA vision statement
Who is affected?

- Mental illness and addictions indirectly affect all Canadians at some point in their life, either personally or through a family member, friend or colleague.
- In any given year, one in five Canadians will personally experience a mental health problem or illness.
- Mental illness affects people of all ages, education, income levels and cultures.

How common is it?

- By age 40, about 50% of the population will have, or have had, a mental illness.
- Approximately 8% of adults will experience major depression at some time in their lives.
- Schizophrenia affects 1% of the Canadian population.
- About 1% of Canadians will experience bipolar disorder (or “manic depression”).
- Anxiety disorders affect 5% of the household population, causing mild to severe impairment.
- Suicide accounts for 24% of all deaths among 15-24 year olds and 16% among 25-44 year olds.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth aged 15-24.
- The mortality rate due to suicide among men is three times the rate among women.
- As many as 10% of people over age 15 may be dependent on alcohol or drugs.

What causes it?

- A complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors cause mental illnesses.
- Almost one half (49%) of those who feel they have suffered from depression or anxiety have never gone to see a doctor about this problem.
- Stigma or discrimination attached to mental illnesses and addictions presents a serious barrier, not only to diagnosis and treatment but also to acceptance in the community.
- Mental illnesses and addictions can be treated effectively.

What is the economic cost?

- The economic cost of mental illnesses in Canada for the medical system was estimated to be at least $7.9 billion in 1998 –$4.7 billion in care and $3.2 billion in disability and early death.
- An additional $6.3 billion was spent on uninsured mental health services and time off work for depression and distress that was not treated by the health care system.
- In 1999, 3.8% of all admissions to general hospitals (1.5 million hospital days) were due to anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, major depression, personality disorders, eating disorders and suicidal behaviour.
- The economic cost to Alberta related to addictions was $5.5 billion, as reported in 2014.
- The estimation of direct and indirect costs of suicide in Alberta was $811 million in 2015 (Anielski, 2015).

Mental Health & Mental Illness

“Mental health can be defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

-Mental disorders (illnesses) comprise a broad range of problems, with different symptoms. However, they are generally characterized by some combination of abnormal thoughts, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others. Examples are schizophrenia, depression, intellectual disabilities and disorders due to drug abuse. Most of these disorders can be successfully treated.”

-World Health Organization
Who is Eligible to Vote?

To vote in the 2019 Alberta election an individual must be:

- A Canadian citizen
- At least 18 years of age
- Ordinarily a resident in Alberta


When will the Provincial Election take place?

The 30th general election of Alberta, Canada, will elect members to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. It will take place on April 16, 2019.

The Election Act fixes the election to a three-month period, between March 1 and May 31 in the fourth calendar year after the preceding Election Day, which in this case was May 5, 2015. This does not affect the powers of the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the Legislature before this period.

This will be the first general election held after the Alberta New Democratic Party (NDP) defeated the Progressive Conservative (PC) government in 2015 - an election that marked only the fourth change of government in the province’s history. It will also be the first election contested by the United Conservative Party (UCP), formed in 2017 by a merger of the PC and Wildrose parties.
1. Keep your efforts focused on your key issues. Distill your concerns and needs to a few main issues—three is a useful limit. Choose issues you can summarize in a few compelling bullet points and convey to candidates in a short conversation. Each issue should be tied to clear, achievable actions that will be readily understood by your supporters and candidates. The goal should be to raise the profile of your issues and gain commitments from the parties on each of your major requests.

2. Avoid any hint of partisanship, even if your issues are politically polarizing as with hot button social policy questions. Stay clear of aligning with any political party or endorsing their positions. Ideally, try to gain support from all major parties so no matter who wins the election, your organization wins. If that is not possible, advance your issues to get the parties to say where they stand and let the voters take it from there.

3. Engage your stakeholders and members in your efforts. Your organization’s supporters are your greatest asset in influencing the political process and government decisions—they are voters after all! Fortunately, the various social media platforms now provide us with tools to engage supporters very cost effectively. Encourage your supporters via Facebook, Twitter and others social media platforms. You can use broadcast emails to talk up your issues and encourage supporters to spread the word to their social networks.

4. Raise the public profile of your issues using new and traditional media. You can generate public buzz around your issues very cost-effectively through social media, op-eds, pre-written stories placed in neighborhood papers and free news coverage in the broadcast media. If your organization has a budget for national media advertising, that’s a huge asset! Make sure your communication focuses tightly on your issues, stays politically neutral and drives traffic to your online campaign through direct links or memorable URLs.

5. Coordinate closely your online and off-line election efforts. Social media and e-advocacy are great for generating and demonstrating support on your issues, but they are most effective in combination with on-the-ground efforts. Engage in private meetings with candidates (always including constituents), letters requesting support from the parties and ask questions at all candidate meetings.

Success Strategies for Advocacy

The following success strategies are credited to Christopher Wilson, author of Nonprofit ADVOCacy during elections: Better to lie low or get active? (Charity Village, March 24, 2015). Some strategies have been edited for application in the Alberta environment.
Localize Your Concerns

You’re encouraged to use the space provided to identify areas of local concern to bring forward with candidates in your area.

Remember to:

• identify the issue you want their support on, such as housing, support for families/caregivers, access to treatment or any other important issue;
• identify something that is working, like a pilot program, evidence or approaches used by other jurisdictions; and
• make your request specific.

Local Concern #1:
A local issue of importance to me/us is:
_________________________________________________

One way this has been addressed locally/in another jurisdiction is:
_________________________________________________

What I/we would like the Government of Alberta to do is:
_________________________________________________

Local Concern #2:
A local issue of importance to me/us is:
_________________________________________________

One way this has been addressed locally/in another jurisdiction is:
_________________________________________________

What I/we would like the Government of Alberta to do is:
_________________________________________________

Local Concern #3:
A local issue of importance to me/us is:
_________________________________________________

One way this has been addressed locally/in another jurisdiction is:
_________________________________________________

What I/we would like the Government of Alberta to do is:
_________________________________________________
GIVE EVERY CHILD IN ALBERTA A HEALTHY START IN LIFE
Positive mental health begins in the earliest years of life. The Government of Alberta must continue to invest in home-visits and parenting programs to support brain development and building parenting skills.

GIVE EVERY CHILD IN ALBERTA A HEAD START & PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS
Preschool, daycare and kindergarten programs must support child and family wellbeing. Furthermore, wellness and mental health strategies must be embedded consistently in school and learning activities. The Alberta education curriculum and schools must promote social and emotional skill development to support student resilience.

SUPPORT FAMILIES IN PROMOTING CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING
Preschool, daycare and kindergarten programs must support child and family wellbeing. Furthermore, wellness and mental health strategies must be embedded consistently in school and learning activities. The Alberta education curriculum and schools must promote social and emotional skill development to support student resilience.

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
Early intervention and education can reduce overall demands on the health care system. The Government of Alberta must put an end to the underfunding of mental health promotion. Investments made in community-level programs strengthen mental health and wellbeing across the population.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS IN ALBERTA
Government of Alberta must invest in community-based programs and development across the life span of Albertans. This is especially important in rural and remote communities and among Albertans who are marginalized and isolated.

CREATING MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES
Working Albertans spend 30-40% of their lives in the workplace. Government of Alberta must support the development of policies and programs which support better mental health in the workplace.

PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH IN PRIMARY CARE
Primary health care providers are often on the front line of mental health support in Alberta. This presents an opportunity to use primary care as a key partner in mental health promotion and illness prevention.
Suicide prevention in Alberta

From 2014 to 2016, 1,590 Albertans died by suicide.

Only 200 of these people sought help from Alberta’s emergency departments. The other 1,390 are in the community. We must be ready to help them.

In 2018, CMHAs across the province facilitated more than 5,000 suicide interventions with Albertans who were considering suicide.

Community care is critical: we save lives.
For citations and more information on the information provided in this toolkit, please contact the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division at alberta@cmha.ab.ca.

Canadian Mental Health Association
Alberta
Mental health for all