



Making Mental Health Matter in Alberta

2019 Tool Kit

Prepared by



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Alberta
Mental health for all

The 2019 *Making Mental Health Matter in Alberta* Tool Kit was created by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division

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Welcome to the *Making Mental Health Matter in Alberta* tool kit presented by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Alberta Division. The tool kit has been designed to provide you with materials to support your efforts in advocating for better mental health outcomes in Alberta. In any given year, one in five people will experience a mental illness¹, however, five in five people have mental health. We've designed this tool kit to give you the information you'll need to make mental health matter in your community.

CMHA Alberta Division believes mental health is a human right^{2, 3} and we are proud to join the many others in Alberta who are advocating for the mental health of all. Today and every day we hope you make mental health a priority. We invite you to join the conversation about mental health and advocate for the importance of community-level supports and services for Albertans facing mental illness and addictions.

Many pages in this tool kit can be copied and used as one-pagers to help educate and inform policy makers, mental health advocates and others within your community. We encourage you to pick and choose, copy and paste, select and reformat the information contained in this kit to help achieve better mental health for all Albertans.

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

David Grauwiler



Executive Director, *CMHA Alberta Division*



A Letter from CMHA Alberta Division's Executive Director



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We are all Advocates of Mental Health

Success Strategies for Advocacy

The following success strategies are from *Nonprofit advocacy carry during elections: Better to lie low or get active?*⁴

Some strategies have been edited for application in the Alberta environment.

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 other 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.

Localize Your Concerns

You're encouraged to use the space provided to identify areas of local concern to bring forward with government officials and stakeholders 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:

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About the Canadian Mental Health Association

“Mentally Healthy
People in a
Healthy Society”

–CMHA vision statement



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The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is a 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, training and support for 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.

The National level of CMHA is responsible for research, policy development and the coordination of nationwide initiatives, such as relations with the federal government and other stakeholders. They also assist the Division’s across the country.

The Alberta Division is responsible for coordinating action related to the provincial government and other provincial organizations. In addition, it is responsible for its own organizational effectiveness, fiscal management, public information, project innovation and social policy initiatives within the province of Alberta. For more than 60 years in Alberta, CMHA has focused on recovery and support for Albertans impacted by mental illness, family support and mental health promotion and education on a community level.

CMHA Regions in Alberta include: CMHA South (Lethbridge), CMHA Southeast (Medicine Hat), CMHA Calgary, CMHA Central (Red Deer), CMHA East Central (Camrose), CMHA Edmonton, CMHA Northwest (Grande Prairie), CMHA Wood Buffalo and the Centre for Suicide Prevention. These Regions have the primary responsibility for development and implementation of mental health, addictions, suicide prevention and housing and poverty reduction services and programs. They are responsible for all facets of service delivery in their geographical region.

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.

Fast Facts about Mental Health, Mental Illness & Addictions

“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.”

-World Health Organization⁵, 2014

“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 Organization⁶, 2018



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The Canadian Mental Health Association has some Fast Facts about Mental Illness⁷

Who is affected?

- Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend or colleague.
- In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness.
- Mental illness affects people of all ages, education, income levels, and cultures.
- Approximately 8% of adults will experience major depression at some time in their lives.
- About 1% of Canadians will experience bipolar disorder (or “manic depression”).

How common is it?

- By age 40, about 50% of the population will have or have had a mental illness.
- Schizophrenia affects 1% of the Canadian population.
- 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 one of the leading causes of death in both men and women from adolescence to middle age.
- The mortality rate due to suicide among men is four times the rate among women.

What causes it?

- A complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors causes 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 presents a serious barrier, not only to diagnosis and treatment but also to acceptance in the community.
- Mental illnesses can be treated effectively.

What is the economic cost?

- The economic cost of mental illnesses in Canada for the health care 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 in general hospitals (1.5 million hospital days) were due to anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, major depression, personality disorders, eating disorders and suicidal behavior. Sources: The Report on Mental Illness in Canada, October 2002. EBIC 1998 (Health Canada 2002), Stephens et al., 2001

How does it impact youth?

- It is estimated that 10-20% of Canadian youth are affected by a mental illness or disorder – the single most disabling group of disorders worldwide.
- Today, approximately 5% of male youth and 12% of female youth, age 12 to 19, have experienced a major depressive episode.
- The total number of 12-19 year olds in Canada at risk for developing depression is a staggering 3.2 million.
- Once depression is recognized, help can make a difference for 80% of people who are affected, allowing them to get back to their regular activities.
- Mental illness is increasingly threatening the lives of our children; with Canada's youth suicide rate the third highest in the industrialized world.
- Suicide is among the leading causes of death in 15-24 year old Canadians, second only to accidents; 4,000 people die prematurely each year by suicide.
- Schizophrenia is youth's greatest disabler as it strikes most often in the 16 to 30 year age group, affecting an estimated one person in 100.
- Surpassed only by injuries, mental disorders in youth are ranked as the second highest hospital care expenditure in Canada.
- In Canada, only 1 out of 5 children who need mental health services receives them.

Three Approaches to Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addictions

The following pages take a deeper look at mental health, mental illness and addictions by connecting them to the following overarching approaches:

Whole of Life

All of Government

All of Community



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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.



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STEPPED CARE IS BEST CARE

In Alberta, we must support development and access to integrated and improved systems, like stepped care, across the lifespan. We need better systems, not more navigators.

In 2017, Albertans made almost one million appointments to discuss their mental health concerns with a doctor¹¹. However, many of these concerns could have been addressed through peer support, community care or other, more appropriate care. Community care is a key element of our healthcare system. At the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), we believe 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 intensive to the most intensive. A stepped care model maintains that community-based, low-intensity interventions are more cost-effective. This model leverages universal, selective and indicated interventions available in community-based supports and is premised upon a continuum of mental health promotion and mental illness prevention¹².

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 in to 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 Use¹³, 2014



For more information on stepped care, please see the CMHA National Stepped Care Model.

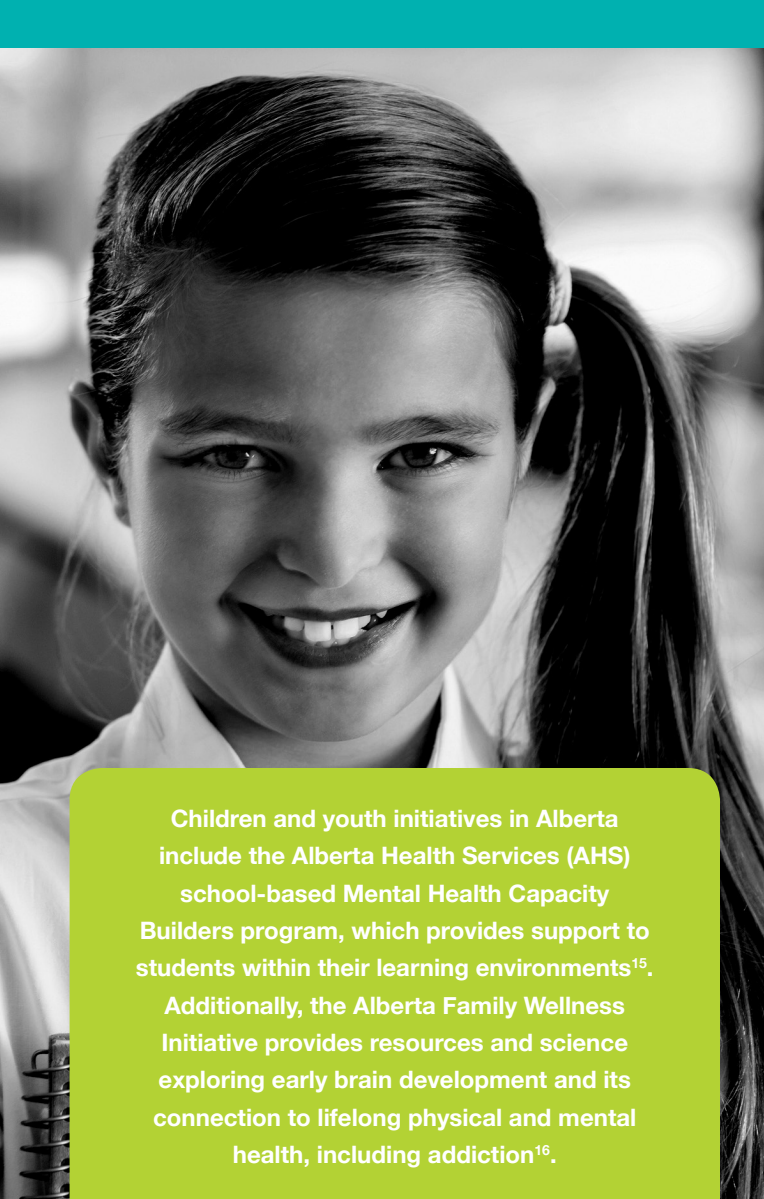
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All Albertans have mental health.
Any Albertan at any age can face a mental health or addiction challenge.



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Children and youth initiatives in Alberta include the Alberta Health Services (AHS) school-based Mental Health Capacity Builders program, which provides support to students within their learning environments¹⁵. Additionally, the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative provides resources and science exploring early brain development and its connection to lifelong physical and mental health, including addiction¹⁶.

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE A PRIORITY

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta continues to advocate for child and youth mental health. We recommend quality community and school-based supports and services that directly affect children’s ability to build resilience and address mental health concerns. These early interventions are proven to be most cost effective and provide children and youth with the early skills to support their mental health.

Youth ages 12 to 24 are among the most underserved population in regard to mental health and addictions in Alberta¹⁴. CMHA, Alberta Division, along with other partners, are working with the Government of Alberta to allow for further development of local Integrated Youth Service Delivery Hubs (Youth 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 health services. Youth Hubs provide youth with a one-stop-shop to physical health, mental health, mental illness and addictions services in an easily-accessible and supportive way.

Caregiver Connections is an Alberta-wide family support initiative, where peers support others caring for a child, youth or other dependent with a mental health concern or illness. CMHA Regions in Alberta, including Edmonton, South (Lethbridge), Southeast (Medicine Hat), Central (Red Deer), East Central (Camrose) and Wood Buffalo, conduct this network of peer-to-peer family support services, sharing information and resources to assist caregivers in achieving wellness for themselves in their journey supporting a child or other dependent. At CMHA, we believe offering peer-led support enables access to information and community supports, grows mental health capacity, improves awareness of resources and increases the emotional supports for families affected by, or concerned about, their family’s mental health.

“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 Canada¹⁷, 2016

ALBERTA'S SUICIDE PREVENTION WORK MUST CONTINUE

The Centre for Suicide Prevention (CSP) and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta continue to advocate for investment in suicide prevention.

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 Alberta Health Services (AHS), to do this important work, and it is imperative this work continues.

For 38 years, the CSP, a branch of CMHA, has been driving suicide prevention in the province. An important part of their work is training. CSP offers a wide variety of skills-based training that prepares individuals for suicide intervention.



For information on these trainings and to register, visit suicideinfo.ca/workshops.

Mental health and mental illness

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637 people died by suicide in Alberta in 2017¹⁸. That's more than double the number of Albertans who died in motor vehicle accidents in 2016¹⁹.



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MENTAL HEALTH OF SENIORS IS AN EMERGING PRIORITY

As Albertans age, the mental health of senior citizens is a clear priority for the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta.

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 decades²⁰.

Depression and social isolation are critical mental health issues faced by Alberta's senior population²¹.

In our province, CMHA is a partner in offering Mental Health First Aid for Senior's training to more than one thousand Albertans. This initiative is funded through the Government of Alberta and is one example of prioritizing senior's mental health.

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“The mental health of older adults can be improved through promoting active and healthy aging. 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 Organization²², 2017

WORKPLACE PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH & SAFETY IS IMPORTANT

The mental health of workers is an emerging priority for Alberta employers. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta believes building mental health capacity in all workplaces will reduce the financial cost of mental illness on the economy.

In Canada, 500,000 employees are unable to attend work due to mental illness, and employees report stress as the primary cause of their mental health problems²³. The Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace was developed in Canada in 2013 and includes 13 psychosocial factors that affect the mental health of all working Albertans. Employers who wish to improve the mental health and wellness of their employees should consider these factors to create mentally healthy working environments.

CMHA Alberta Division's Certified Psychological Health and Safety Advisor Training is a groundbreaking certification training program for individuals and consultants who want to help organizations improve psychological health and safety in their workplaces.

CMHA in Alberta provides Mental Health Works, a suite of capacity building workshops on workplace mental health for both employers and employees. Our approach is person-centered, evidence-based and solutions-focused. We meet the needs of workplaces for mental health training in three essential areas: awareness, responding and collaboration.

To share industry-leading workplace mental health initiatives and education with the employees and employers of the province, CMHA Alberta Division hosts the annual Working Stronger conference. Working Stronger is two days of dialogue, information exchange and networking to advance mental health in the workplace. It involves an array of keynote speakers, workshops and presentations to provide workplaces with real-world tools and resources for all organization types.

“It's critical that employers consider the mental health of the entire workforce and develop a strategy that addresses all levels of mental health programming, including preventative measures to keep employees healthy, early intervention to navigate through challenges, and supportive policies to aid in effective transition back into the workplace.”

Shepell, Mental Health Commission of Canada²⁴, 2018



For more information on CMHA workplace training and conferences, please visit alberta.cmha.ca.

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MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

Better mental health begins with health promotion for all. In particular, upstream approaches to a mentally healthy society, such as building resiliency, awareness and mental health literacy. Mental health promotion is proven to be a low cost investment with high returns on population health.

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, the Canadian Mental Health Association (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.

Healthy Campus Alberta (HCA) is an example of a successful mental health promotion initiative. HCA is community of practice that serves to partner with campuses and stakeholders interested in post-secondary mental health and addiction from across the province. HCA's vision is to “educate, collaborate, and advocate; transforming culture and creating caring campus communities throughout the province of Alberta.”²⁵ This CMHA in Alberta project is committed to achieving the mission through accessible and sustainable program ideas; sharing best practices and research; and fostering a culture of support and compassion for all post-secondary institutions across Alberta, all while recognizing their unique needs for success.

“The considerable and growing annual cost of treating mental health problems and mental illness in Canada— \$42 billion nationwide and \$6.3 billion in workplaces—has brought increased attention to the early and continuous development of positive mental health. Through interventions in communities, workplaces and schools, mental health promotion (MHP) cultivates positive mental health for all people, including those living with and without a mental illness.”

—Cohesive, Collaborative, Collective: Advancing Mental Health Promotion in Canada²⁶, CMHA



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For the results of this research, please read *“Do I want to live like this?”* by CMHA Alberta Division by visiting alberta.cmha.ca.

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UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION

Around the globe, more than 300 million people suffer from depression, and it is the leading cause of disability worldwide²⁷. In Alberta, many people who suffer from depression do not receive the support or treatment they need. Our province requires better system coverage, better system integration and adequate and available resources to help individuals living with depression disorders like Major Depressive Disorder (MDD).

At The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Alberta Division, we aim to understand depression and the affects it has on those living with it. We have developed a paper on MDD and its implications on the lives of those living with the disorder. Someone is living with MDD if their depression is unresolved after the use of two or more antidepressant agents. The information collected by this project contributed to a greater understanding of individuals living with, or caring for someone living with, unresolved depression. The findings are used to support Albertans impacted by depression wherein existing treatment options have not provided relief.

“Depressive disorders are among the most commonly diagnosed mental illness. An estimated one in every four Canadians has a degree of depression severe enough to need treatment at some time in his or her life.”

Canadian Mental Health Association²⁸,
Alberta Division 2019

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BRINGS MENTAL HEALTH HOME

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta believes communities need an opportunity to identify what mental health and addiction supports they need. It is important to 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 Division's Rural Mental Health Project focuses on the development of local mental health community action plans in 150 communities across the province. Local community Animators in participating rural and remote communities convene local stakeholders, including community members and elders, agencies, educators and community associations, to collectively scan the current mental health and addictions landscape. Together, communities can set direction, generate solutions and implement a transformational roadmap dedicated to supporting a mentally health community.

“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 Organization²⁹, 2014



For more information on the Rural Mental Health Project, please visit ruralmentalhealth.ca.

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ACCESS TO SERVICES MUST IMPROVE, ESPECIALLY FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Indigenous communities are chronically underserved. Awareness and investment in Indigenous mental health and addictions treatment must increase.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit 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 discrimination³⁰.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), PolicyWise for Children & Families, the Mental Health Foundation and the Graham Boeckh Foundation are working together to develop a provincial initiative to help spread and scale Integrated Youth Service Delivery Hubs (Youth Hubs) in a variety of contexts, while building off work already underway and aligning existing efforts. It proposes working with Albertan communities to develop a network of integrated sites across the province where young people can go to access the range of services they need and ultimately improve their mental health. Youth Hubs are currently piloted in Indigenous communities across Alberta including Maskwachis and Enoch Cree Nation and are a promising step to increase access to mental health services.

CMHA in Alberta advocates for the strategic development and investment in improved mental health and addictions outcomes for Indigenous communities undertaken through a matrix of provincial initiatives. Indigenous engagement working-groups and projects are being funded by Alberta Health. A more coordinated approach can support and advance efforts in this critical area.

“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.”

–*Valuing Mental Health*, The Alberta Mental Health Review³¹, 2015

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ADDRESSING ALBERTA'S OPIOID CRISIS

Funding and awareness must increase to address the provincial opioid crisis. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta believes supporting those living with addiction is critical to advancing recovery in Alberta.

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 issue³².

In 2019, CMHA released the Carry It tool kit to help reduce drug overdoses on Canadian campuses. Many campuses do not have protocol in place for overdoses, which means they do not have on-site tools to respond to an opioid overdose³³. Because substance use is very common on campus, being prepared for opioid overdose is necessary wherever you live, work or study. This tool kit helps prevent opioid overdose on campuses and will guide Albertan schools in creating an opioid overdose protocol.

CMHA in Alberta supports the creation of the 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 Alberta³⁴, n.d.



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RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

Peers and recovery-oriented practice can create opportunities for change. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta supports and promotes these recovery-oriented practices, such as peer support and CMHA's Recovery Colleges.

CMHA Recovery College's Peer Training and Integrated Youth Service Delivery Hubs (Youth Hubs) are providing recovery support for thousands of Albertans each year. Government of Alberta grant funding is currently supporting 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.

Youth Hubs are youth-friendly, prevention-focused environments that integrate mental health and addiction services, peer support, social services, and primary health care. They provide resources to help youth manage their health and navigate pathways to specialized services. Youth Hubs are person-centered, respond to community needs, genuinely engage youth and families, promote mental health services at the right time, in the right place, by the right provider, integrate primary health care and mental health care and focus on supporting transitions for youth.

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“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 Canada³⁵, n.d.



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All of Government Approaches

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



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

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta supports a health-equity approach, which means government spending targets for mental health and addictions should approach 12 per cent of the total health budget³⁶.

In spite of efforts made by different levels of government across the country, evidence shows we are not meeting the mental health needs of all Albertans. 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 six per cent of the provincial health budget is spent on mental health and addictions³⁷. CMHA in Alberta believes the spending by the Government of Alberta must increase this spending to at least 12 per cent³⁸. This increase will create equitable access and support across the province.

Mental health and mental illness

All of Community Approaches

Positive mental health flourishes
in healthy communities.



Canadian Mental
Health Association
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“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.”

–Strengthening the Case for Investing in Canada’s Mental Health System; Economic Considerations, Mental Health Commission of Canada³⁹, 2017

A HEALTH-EQUITY (PARITY) LENS

Mental and physical health should be seen as equal importance to one's wellbeing. In Alberta, the publicly-funded health services need to include mental health and addiction treatment.

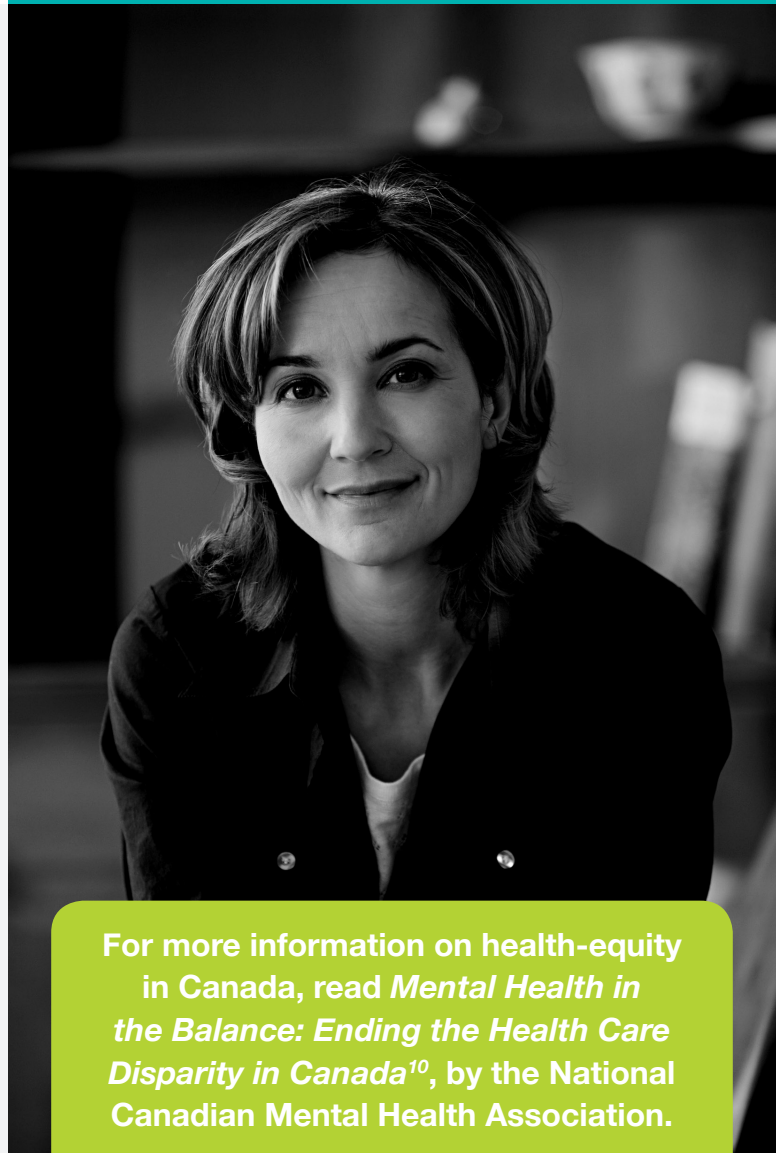
In Alberta, access to publicly funded mental health and addictions supports are limited and impacted by long wait times. This situation precludes thousands of Albertans from accessing the help they need when they need it. This situation creates greater jeopardy especially for children and youth.

Psychologists, talk therapists and 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. Up to 80 per cent of Canadians rely on their family physicians to meet their mental health and addictions care needs⁴⁰. Evidence-based health care is the foundation of the mental health and addictions response in other G7 countries⁴¹, but these services are not guaranteed through Alberta's public system. Consequently, Canadians spend \$950 million on counselling services each year—30 per cent of it out of pocket⁴².

Chronic underfunding of health care has created an environment which fosters a two-tier system. In Alberta, we must promote open access to all; investment is needed to guard our public health care system. CMHA in Alberta continues to advocate for the province to adopt a health-equity lens. A health-equity approach would place mental health on the same standing of importance as physical health.

“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.”

– *Mental health in the balance: ending the health care disparity in Canada*, Canadian Mental Health Association⁴³, 2018



For more information on health-equity in Canada, read *Mental Health in the Balance: Ending the Health Care Disparity in Canada*¹⁰, by the National Canadian Mental Health Association.

Mental health and mental illness

All of Government Approaches

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



Canadian Mental Health Association
Alberta
Mental health for all



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 structural considerations to elevate the profile of mental health, mental illness and addictions across all ministries.

Mental health is related to multiple domains and is not a singular health matter. To meet the growing demand for mental health and addictions support and services, all Government of Alberta ministries must see mental health as a priority.

The Government of Alberta has identified an Executive Steering Committee⁴⁴. 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 structure in support of implementing the committee's recommendations, which was a promising first step. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta supports this cross-ministry approach to system improvement, including the blending of funding from multiple ministries.

Mental health and mental illness

All of Government Approaches

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



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"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 Strategy⁴⁵, 2017-2020



Appendix

Making Mental Health Matter in Alberta Tool Kit 2019

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9707-110 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 2L9

 (780) 482-6576

 alberta@cmha.ab.ca



Canadian Mental
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"HEALTHY PEOPLE IN A HEALTHY SOCIETY"

-CMHA VISION STATEMENT



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.



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“Do I want to live like this?”

Albertans describe depression unresolved after use of two or more antidepressant agents

THE ISSUE

Depression is one of the most prevalent mood disorders in Canada. Signs of depression include feeling sad, worthless, hopeless, guilty or anxious a lot of the time.

Depression can be difficult to treat for some people – this can mean someone still experiences symptoms of depression even after using two or more antidepressant agents.

OUR APPROACH

The **Canadian Mental Health Association** Alberta Division spoke with 16 adults (22–62 years) across Alberta to understand the impact of unresolved depression on every day life and explore people’s experience with current medication and treatment options.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Better system coverage

More publicly-funded treatment options are needed.

Better system integration

Integrated care can improve service provision.

Resources

Improving information availability and accessibility on websites, webinars and public education and events can be helpful. Supporting caregivers can also help.

WHAT ARE ALBERTANS SAYING?

Participant-reported challenges living with unresolved depression

Having unresolved depression was like “getting a terminal illness diagnosis”

Declining a treatment option is viewed as being “non compliant”

Limited funding options for mental health treatments and supports leads to high out-of-pocket expenses

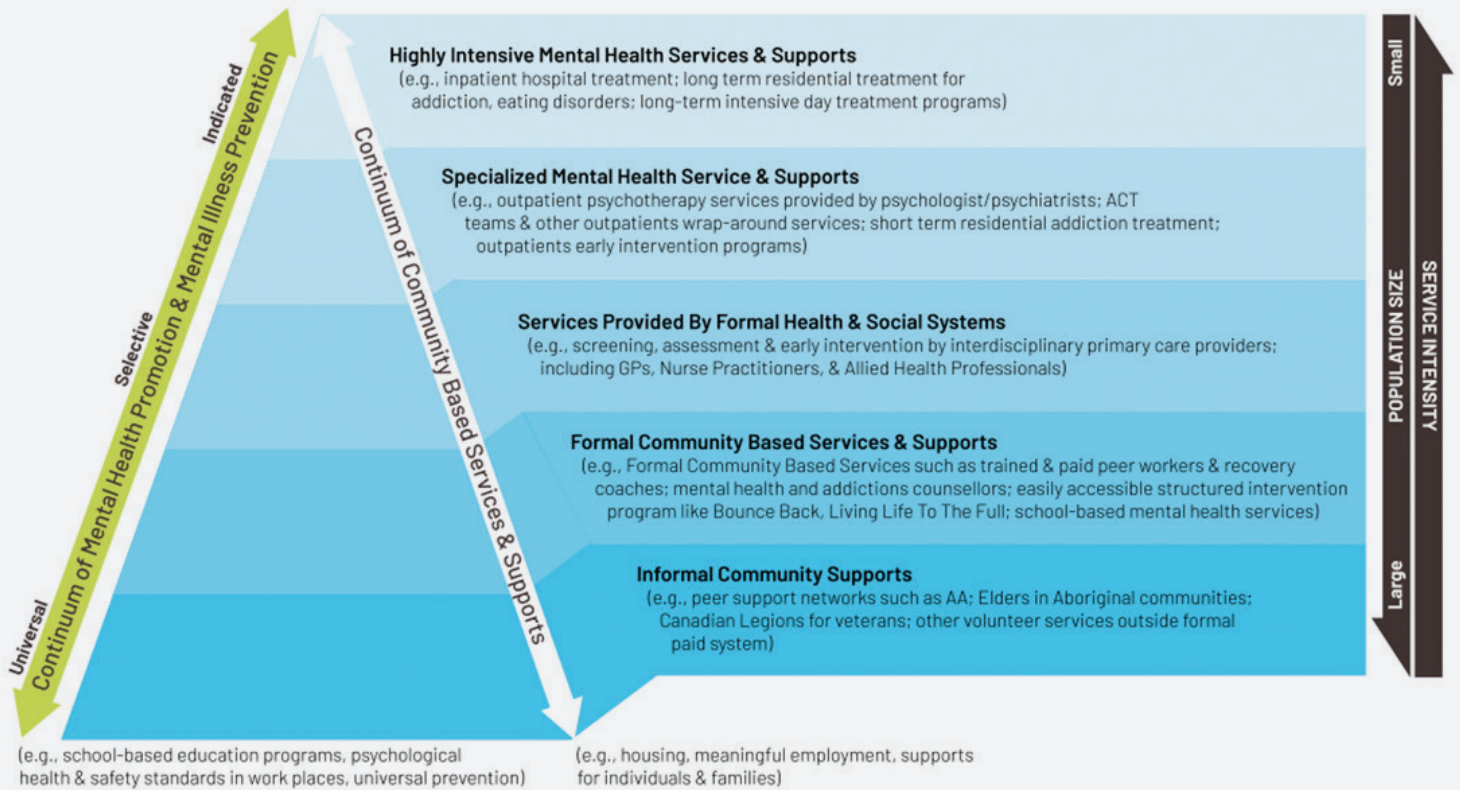
Family and friends don’t know how to help – resources for them are needed

Self-loathing restricts relationships and social participation



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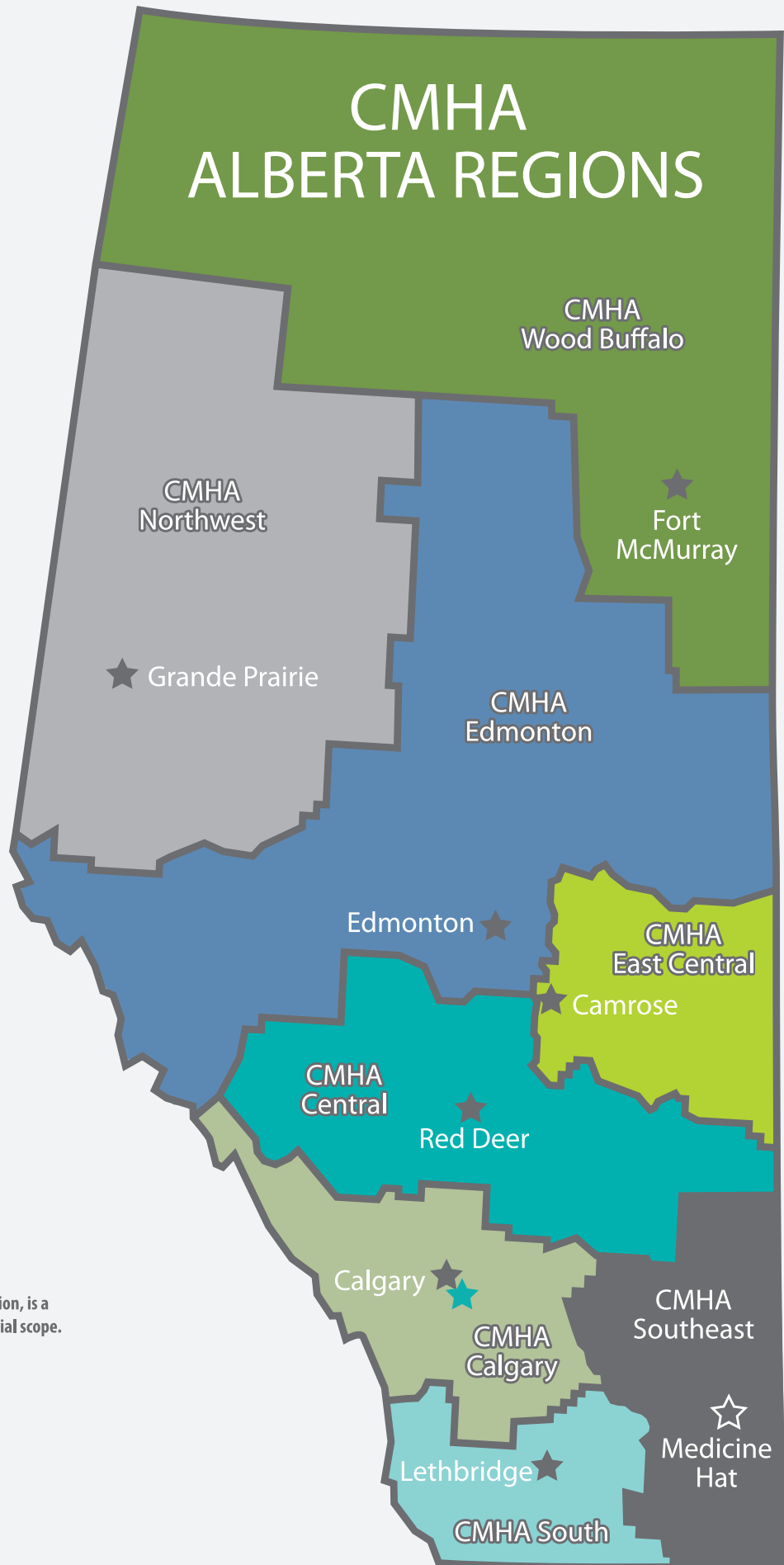
Stepped Care Model



➤ **FIGURE 1.** CMHA National Stepped Care Model
(Adapted from British Columbia Ministry of Health Services and Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2010).

COHESIVE, COLLABORATIVE, COLLECTIVE: ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION IN CANADA

CMHA ALBERTA REGIONS



NOTE:

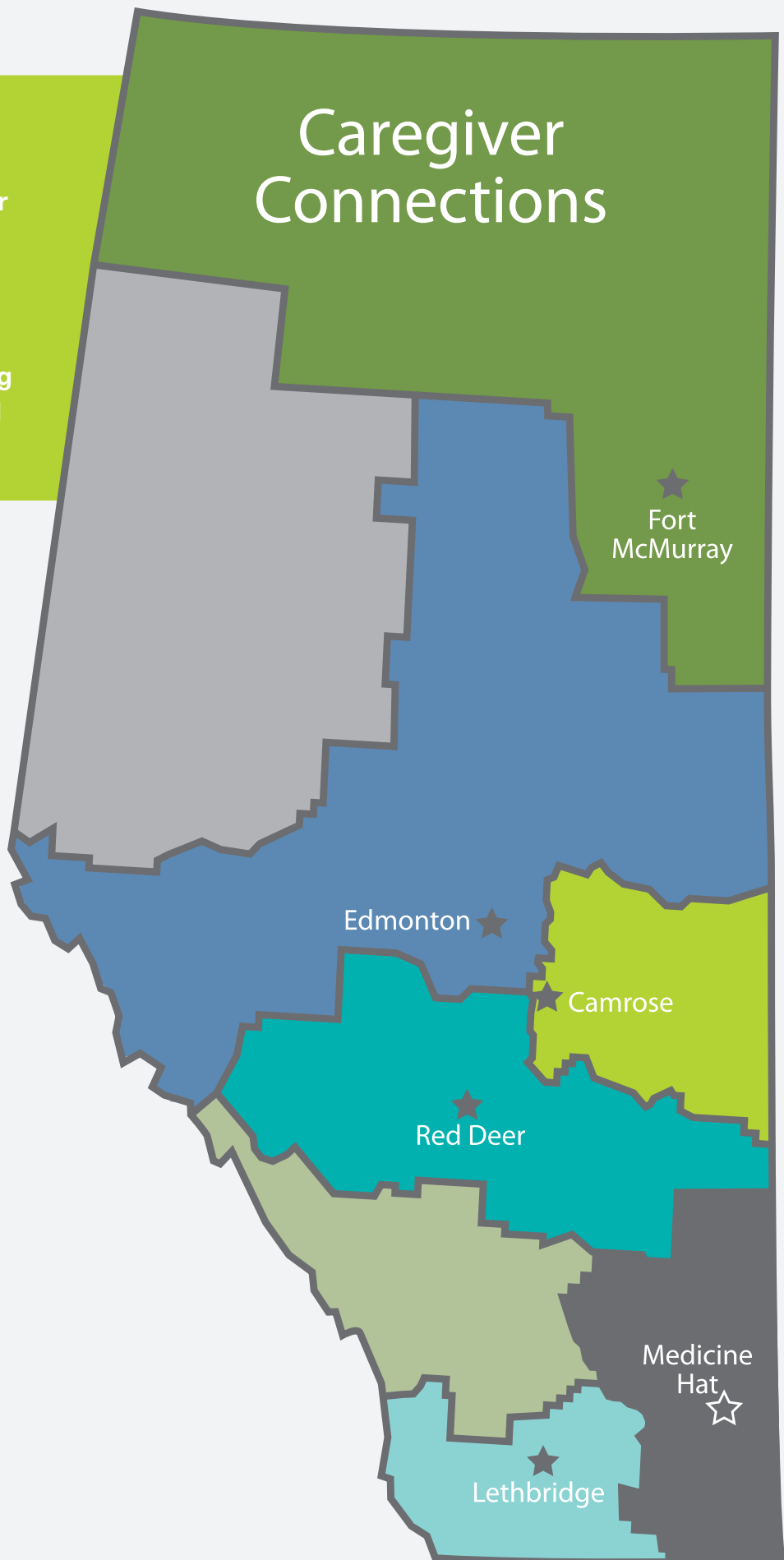
- ★ CMHA office locations
- ★ Centre for Suicide Prevention, is a CMHA Region with provincial scope.



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Operating in six communities across the province, Caregiver Connections offers peer-to-peer support for families and individuals who are parenting or supporting a person with a mental health concern.

Caregiver Connections



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CMHA Alberta Division, in partnership with the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Ministry of Seniors and Housing, has provided Mental Health First Aid for Seniors training to over 1,000 Albertans, helping support seniors and those who care for them.

Mental Health First Aid for Seniors





Healthy Campus Alberta (HCA) is a community of practice that supports the advancement of mental health strategies specific to post-secondary campuses across the province. HCA has members from all 32 post-secondary institutions in Alberta including the five Indigenous Colleges.

Healthy Campus Alberta

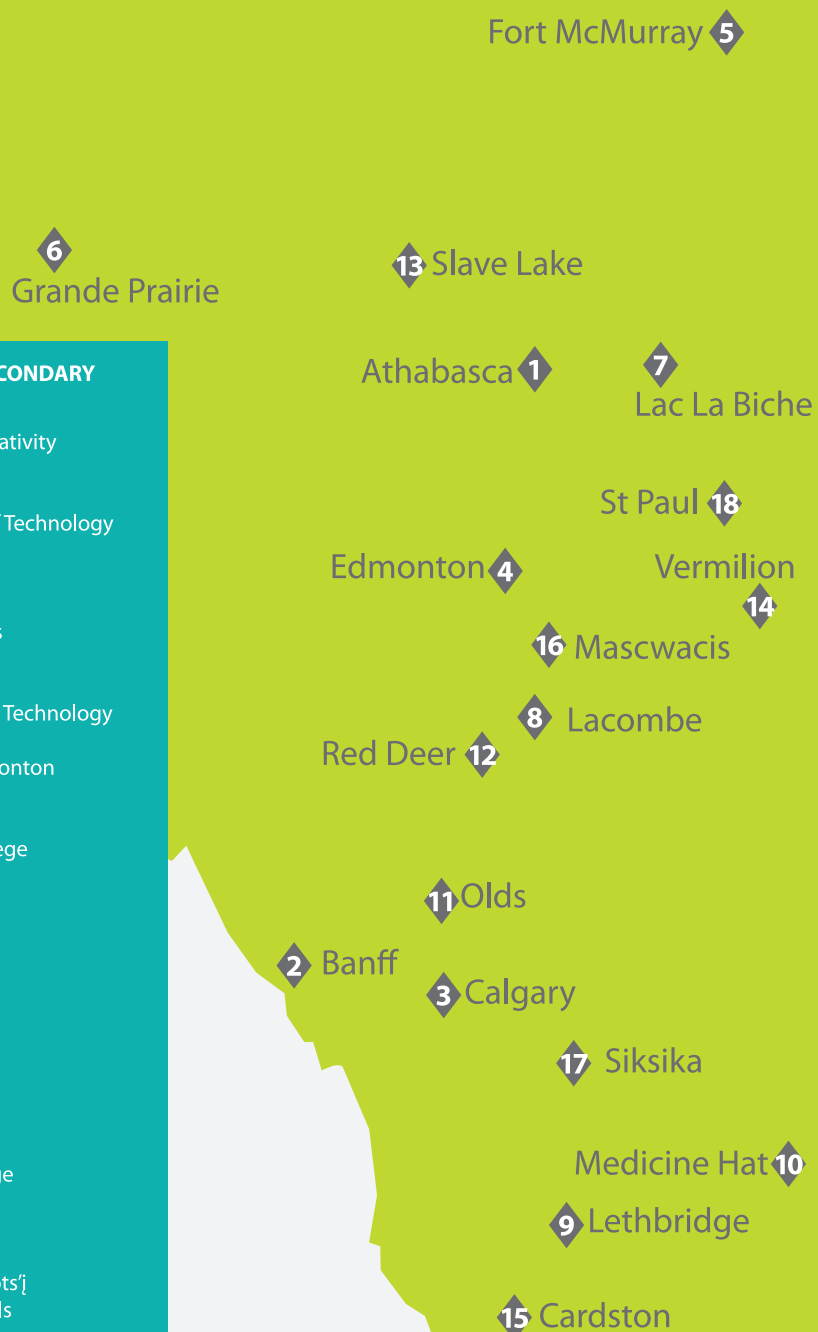
LEGEND

PUBLICALLY FUNDED POST-SECONDARY

- 1 Athabasca University
- 2 Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity
- 3 University of Calgary
- 3 Mount Royal University
- 3 Southern Alberta Institute of Technology
- 3 Bow Valley College
- 3 Ambrose University
- 3 St. Mary's University
- 3 Alberta University of the Arts
- 4 University of Alberta
- 4 MacEwan University
- 4 Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
- 4 NorQuest College
- 4 Concordia University of Edmonton
- 4 The King's University
- 5 Keyano College
- 6 Grande Prairie Regional College
- 7 Portage Collage
- 8 Burman University
- 9 University of Lethbridge
- 9 Lethbridge College
- 10 Medicine Hat College
- 11 Olds College
- 12 Red Deer College
- 13 Northern Lakes College
- 14 Lakeland College

First Nations Colleges

- 15 Red Crow Community College
- 4 Yellowhead Tribal College
- 16 Mascwacis Cultural College
- 17 Old Sun Community College
- 18 University nuhelot'įne thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills



Integrated Youth Hubs

CMHA Alberta Division is the administrative host for Integrated Youth Service Delivery Hubs in Alberta. Fourteen to 20 communities will develop youth-oriented service delivery hubs that support physical health, mental health and addictions, and provide access to supports and services in a youth-friendly environment.



LEGEND

- ★ Cohort 1
- Cohort 2

Note – Additional Youth Hub Related Activities include:

Access Open Minds Sites

Edmonton – University of Alberta
– Bill Rees YMCA

The ALEX

Calgary – Youth Health Centre



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Rural Mental Health Project

ruralmentalhealth.ca

The Rural Mental Health Project trains and embeds mental health Animators in 150 rural and remote communities in Alberta over three years. The project's goal is to develop action plans to advance mental health on a community level.

Girouxville ★
 Birch Hills ★
 Smoky River ★
 Falher ★
 Donnelly ★
 McLennan ★

○ Lac La Biche

○ St Albert

★ Hinton

★ Devon ★
 Warburg ★
 Beaumont ★
 Leduc ★
 Lloydminster ○

★ Jasper

○ Eckville
 ○ Sylvan Lake
 ○ Flagstaff

○ Starland County

○ Airdrie
 ○ Drumheller

★ Vulcan

○ Nanton

LEGEND

- COHORT 1A
- ★ COHORT 1B



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Effective as of August 15, 2019

Not Myself Today

A healthier workforce means a healthier bottom line. Not Myself Today® is an evidence-informed, practical solution that helps employers transform mental health at work.

Alberta Gaming & Liquor Commission

AltaGas Utilities Ltd **ATB Financial**

ATCO Electricity General

Bennett Jones CANA Group of Companies

ALBERTA UNION OF PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES

Alberta Infrastructure City of Chestermere

City of Edmonton Hull Services

Dogs with Wings Assistance Dog Society

DynaLIFE Medical Labs ENERPLUS

ATCO Electricity Transmission & Distribution

PSYCHOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

Fringe Theatre Adventures Hôpital Glengarry

JASPER EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION CENTRE

REDI Enterprises Mental Health Capacity Building

P.A.W.S., PEMBINA HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PolicyWise for Children & Families

Lethbridge College Sturgeon County

The Good Samaritan Society

WestJet Airlines Ltd.

Interior Community Services

Alberta BlueCross

INN FROM THE COLD

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Memorial Hospital

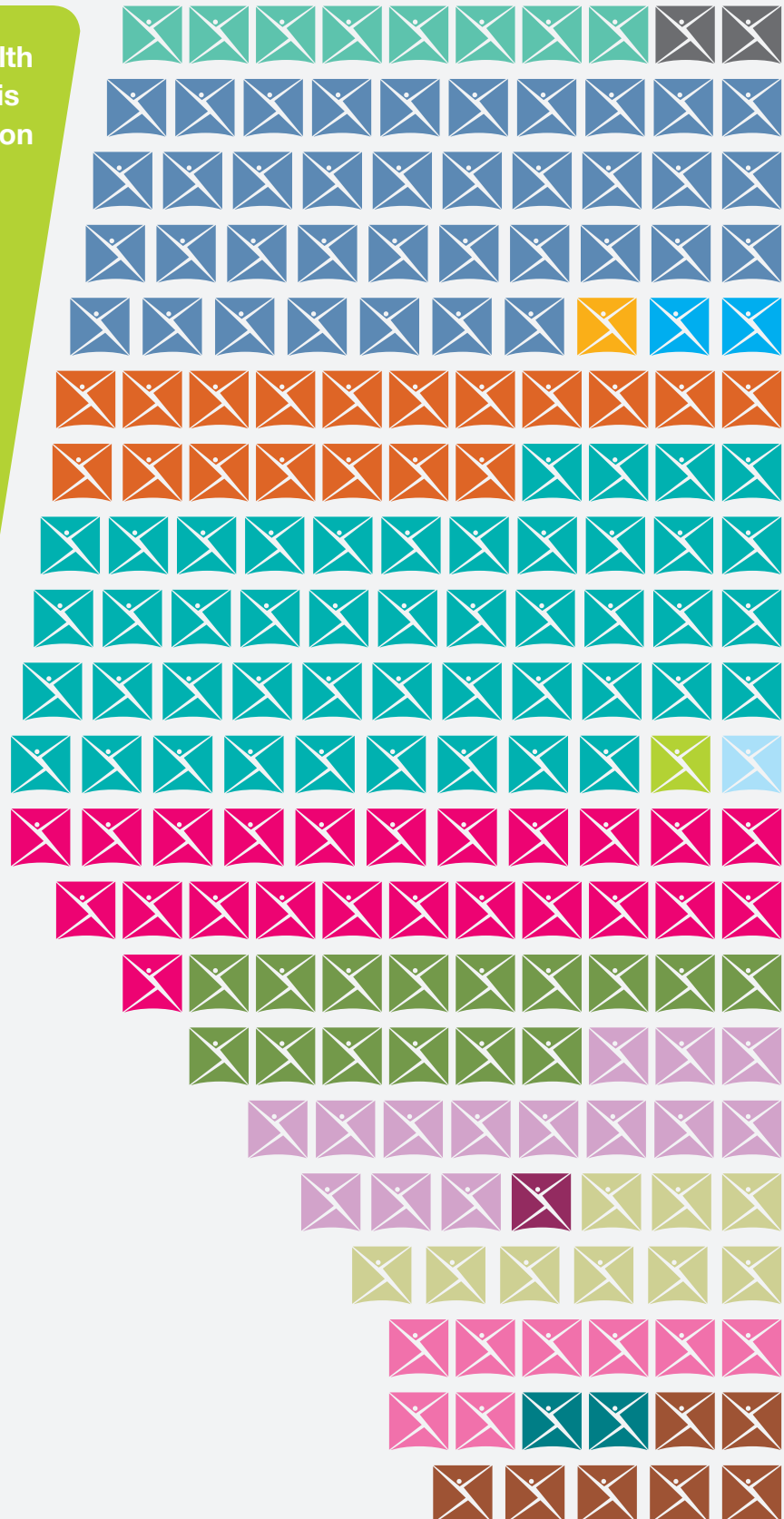
City of Lethbridge

Certified Psychological Health & Safety Advisor Training

Certified Psychological Health and Safety Advisor training is a groundbreaking certification program for individuals and consultants who want to help organizations improve psychological health and safety in their workplaces, or implement the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (the Standard).

INDUSTRY LEGEND

-  Association
-  Benefits Carrier
-  Charity
-  Conservation
-  Construction
-  Consulting
-  Education
-  Emergency Services
-  Fitness
-  Government
-  Health and Safety
-  Healthcare
-  Industry
-  Oil and Gas
-  Product
-  Trades
-  Union



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Notes



For more information on
this tool kit, please contact
the Canadian Mental Health
Association, Alberta Division at
alberta@cmha.ab.ca.



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