

Mental Health of Seniors is a Priority

As the Albertan population ages, the mental health of senior citizens must be a priority.



Issue Summary

Alberta's senior population is growing faster than any other age group. As of June 2021, over 680,000 Albertans are over the age of 65, and that number is expected to double within the next two decades.¹⁴ Depression and social isolation are critical mental health issues faced by Alberta's senior population.¹⁴

Solution

Invest in community-led support programs for seniors that support those who are facing depression, social isolation or other issues specific to ageing.

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Research

“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,¹⁵ 2017



Alberta Examples

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Edmonton Region provides the Seniors Abuse Helpline in the Edmonton Metro Area. The helpline provides confidential, non-judgmental and short-term crisis intervention, emotional support and resources to those who are experiencing or concerned about someone else experiencing seniors’ abuse.

CMHA, Alberta South Region (Lethbridge) is a member of the Seniors Community Services Partnership. This collaborative offers an integrated agency staffing model for seniors and their families. Services include information and referral, outreach, assessment services, case management, service development, system advocacy and community engagement.

¹⁴ Resources to help seniors age in their community (n.d.). *Government of Alberta*. Retrieved from <https://www.alberta.ca/seniors-resources.aspx>

¹⁵ Mental health of older adults. (2017, December). *World Health Organization*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-of-older-adults>