

# The Need for Coordinated Investments to Promote Positive Mental Health

Given the widespread population impacts of mental illness, addictions and wellbeing, the Government of Alberta and municipal governments across the province must explore structural considerations to elevate the profile of mental health, mental illness and addictions across all ministries.<sup>41</sup>



## Issue Summary

Mental health affects all ministries, not just health. Education, Children's Services, Seniors and Housing, among many others, have a mental health aspect, as each population has their own mental health challenges. Further, local governments are tasked with addressing community issues like homelessness, addictions and affordable transportation. Without local coordination and cross-ministry investments, some populations are left without mental health support.



## Solution

In Alberta, the *Valuing Mental Health: Next Steps* report identifies an Executive Steering Committee.<sup>43</sup> This committee consists of the Government of Alberta Deputy Ministers and 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. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) in Alberta supports this cross-ministry approach to system improvement, including the blending of funding from multiple ministries.

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## Research

“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,<sup>44</sup> 2017-2020



## Alberta Examples

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a funding partnership between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities or Metis Settlements.<sup>45</sup> FCSS receives its mandate from the Family and Community Support Services Act and the Family and Community Support Services Regulation and is an example of positive investment in mental health.

<sup>43</sup> Government of Alberta (2017). *Valuing mental health: next steps*. Retrieved from: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460134771>

<sup>44</sup> Government of British Columbia (2017). *B.C.’s Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy*. Retrieved from [http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs2017\\_2/681562/mental-health-substance-use-strategy.pdf](http://www.llbc.leg.bc.ca/public/pubdocs/bcdocs2017_2/681562/mental-health-substance-use-strategy.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> FCSS program overview (n.d.). *Government of Alberta*. Retrieved from <https://www.alberta.ca/family-and-community-support-services-fcss-program.aspx>