

ANNUAL REPORT
2023–24

Shaping our future



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Alberta
Mental health for all

A message from our board president, Brent Korte & CEO, Mara Grunau

The past year for the Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division (CMHA Alberta), has been marked by significant change as the Board has actively promoted and steered community mental health programming in Alberta, collaborating with the eight Regions in the province and the Centre for Suicide Prevention (CSP).

Historically, our primary focus has been on community mental health care, emphasizing education, training, advocacy, peer and family support, and crisis response. In September 2024, the Boards of CMHA Alberta and CSP announced their amalgamation, further integrating suicide prevention into our work, enhancing CMHA Alberta's reach and impact across the province.

At CMHA Alberta we embrace community mental health principles, implementing our work through a network of partnerships with various agencies and groups. Our vision is to create a stronger, more coordinated, and efficient network of community mental health providers. This network will better steward community investment, encourage participation, and deliver targeted local programs, ultimately improving access and care for Albertans.

At CMHA Alberta, we firmly believe that community mental health care is health care. Together with our Regions and other partners, we are working to build an Alberta where people's wellbeing is supported within their communities – by a friend, a peer, a support group, their local CMHA office, any one of our many partner agencies, or the medical system.

By collaborating more intelligently and efficiently and through expanded programming, we can ensure that Albertans receive the mental health care they need, when and where they need it. Together we're shaping our future.



Brent Korte
Board President



Mara Grunau
CEO

Rural Mental Health Project



The Rural Mental Health Project and Network (RMH) supports rural communities across Alberta.

RMH strives to strengthen community capacity for better mental health in rural and remote communities through ongoing training, network collaboration, and community micro grants. RMH enables each participating community to create unique mental health action plans that build on their strengths while meeting their needs. Ongoing support for participating communities is provided from the greater RMH Network.

Highlights

This year RMH dispersed over \$568,000 in community grants to 31 rural communities in support of local mental health initiatives. A total of 283 rural citizens across Alberta have been trained to animate local collaborative mental health action plans. Among the 155 rural communities participating, over 80% have remained active in the RMH Network since 2019.

RMH has also continued hosting over 50 online and in-person events to build mental health capacity and awareness this year. These learning events are for building capacity to organize and lead community-based activities for mental health, improving grant writing and reporting, building awareness of mental health, and reducing stigma on mental illness. RMH continues to increase awareness of the realities of and potential solutions to rural mental health challenges.

What's next

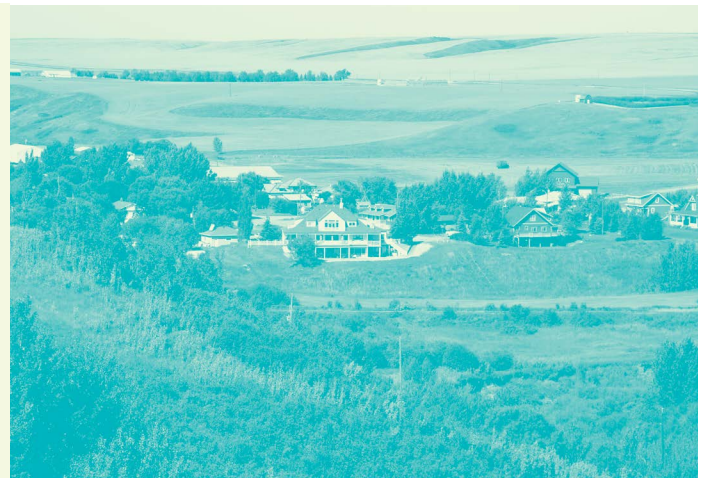
Thanks to the ongoing support and commitment from the Government of Alberta, mandate and funding for RMH was renewed. The team is poised to continue its work and reach across Alberta from 2023-2026.

Learn more about RMH at ruralmentalhealth.ca.



The Rural Mental Health Project's support and grant funding allowed us to open our youth centre. The Rural Mental Health Project provided us with the tools to identify our community's needs."

— Sari, Rural Mental Health Project Sundre
Community Animator



Healthy Campus Alberta



Healthy Campus Alberta (HCA) is a community of practice that transforms campus culture and creates caring campus communities.

It provides a space for post-secondary communities across Alberta to gather and participate in meaningful conversation, connection, and resource-sharing to promote campus and student mental health.

Highlights

This year HCA hosted eight webinars, including a discussion on the intersection between the Workplace and Student Standards, and sessions focused on supporting neurodiverse students and international students. HCA also facilitated three provincial discussion groups aimed at supporting the implementation of the National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-being for Post-secondary Students.

Seeking to engage in-person and provide space for the community of practice to connect, collectively solve problems, and share feedback, HCA organized two in-person Regional Gatherings. A third Regional Gathering was held online for those who were unable to attend in-person. Finally, the annual Wellness Summit took place in June as an in-person gathering of students, staff, faculty, and community members from across the province.

What's next

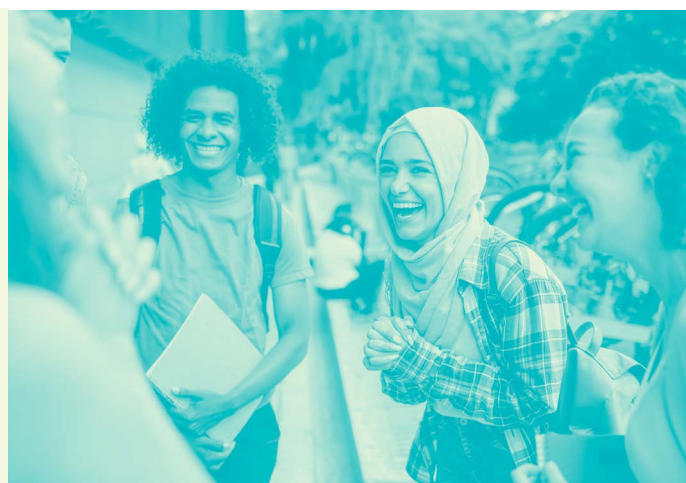
HCA is grateful to the Government of Alberta for their continued support and endorsement of this critical campus mental health work, and looks forward to continuing this collaborative work with them through the renewal of our three-year grant with Advanced Education. As we welcome a new Coordinator to the HCA staff facilitation team, we are excited to engage with the community of practice and continue the work of creating caring campus communities across Alberta.

Learn more about HCA at healthycampusalberta.ca.

When asked about which Healthy Campus Alberta (HCA) activities, events, or resources were most meaningful, a member of the HCA community of practice responded:



The Summit, community Regional Gatherings, webinars, and networking with colleagues. All have helped to build a network of support and share creative ideas and/or evidence-informed approaches."



OSI-CAN Alberta is a community-based peer initiative that supports military, first responders, and public safety personnel affected by psychological injuries and the accompanying mental health impacts.

It delivers a “wrap-around support model” for its participants and operates with no barriers to entry for offered services. Programs and services include: peer support groups for Veterans, first responders, and public safety personnel, peer support groups for family and friends of responders, equine assisted-learning events, one-on-one peer support, and the Resilient Minds training.

Highlights

This year, OSI-CAN Alberta has made significant progress in enhancing its supports, strengthening partnerships, and fostering continued collaboration with various organizations including Resilient Minds, Prospect Human Services, Transition Centre (Canadian Armed Forces), Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Edmonton, EaseCare, and Heroes in Mind, Advocacy and Research Consortium (HiMARC).

Currently, OSI-CAN operates 8 peer support groups and 4 caregiver peer support groups province-wide.

What’s next

In the coming year, OSI-CAN will continue working with the Government of Alberta and other funders to support the expansion of our peer groups with CMHA-National and position our team in a leadership role in the provision of Resilient Minds training.

Learn more about OSI-CAN Alberta at osicanab.ca.



Participating in OSI-CAN’s peer group has shown me that I am so much more than just the identity of the uniform I wore. I can be the father, brother, and loved one to support others.”

— Johnathan, OSI-CAN Peer Group Participant



Caregiver Connections



Caregiver Connections supports caregivers through one-on-one peer support, group support, educational programming, and community outreach.

Caregiver Connections provides peer support for parents and caregivers of people with mental health concerns in CMHA Regions across the province. Based on local caregiver needs, each Region integrates educational content, learning opportunities, resource sharing, and meaningful connection-building activities, fostering an interpersonal network of Caregivers. Peer-based programming for Caregivers allows individuals an opportunity to feel seen and heard by a trained supporter who has lived experience of caregiving.

Highlights

Caregiver Connections operates across five CMHA Regions: Edmonton, Red Deer (Central), Wood Buffalo (Northeast), Grande Prairie (Northwest), and Camrose (East Central), as well as The Family Centre Society of Southern Alberta in Lethbridge.

Program evaluation data gathered during the 2023/2024 fiscal year produced overwhelmingly positive results across key outcomes. These include increased feelings of self-efficacy (91.89%), support of participants' needs as a caregiver (94.59%), social and emotional support (100%), and knowledge of community resources (91.89%).

What's next

CMHA Alberta is engaging with a new partner organization in Medicine Hat. Anticipated onboarding is for Summer 2024 with a September 2024 program start.

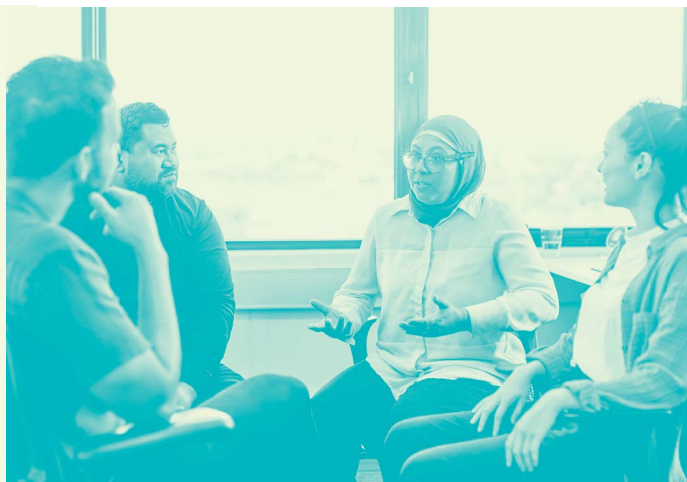
Thanks to the support and endorsement of the Government of Alberta, the Caregiver Connections grant extends to March 2025.

Learn more about Caregiver Connections at alberta.cmha.ca/caregiverconnections.



Caregiver Connections has supported me by allowing me to talk about any issues I have without any judgment. One-on-one and in group sessions I always feel less anxious and better able to be a caregiver because of the help I have received."

— Peer Participant, Caregiver Connections



Recovery College



Recovery Colleges in Alberta offer free wellness and mental health recovery-focused courses for individuals, families, workplaces, and cultural and spiritual communities.

No matter where someone is on their mental health journey, Recovery College is for them.

Highlights

Recovery College Alberta has engaged in collaborative relationship-building across the province to foster a connected and strong collective of Regional Recovery Colleges operating in six CMHA Regions: Edmonton, Lethbridge (South), Red Deer (Central), Wood Buffalo (Northeast), Grande Prairie (Northwest), and Camrose (East Central).

Many of these Regions continue to offer online courses, which facilitate access for rural and remote communities. Some Regions have reintroduced in-person offerings, too. Course content continues to be co-developed to reflect communities' unique needs, harnessing the perspectives of lived experience.

Project evaluation data has indicated significant positive impacts on personal, community, and system-level outcomes. The Facilitator Community of Practice and Peer Mentorship Network has offered opportunities for facilitation staff to connect, engage, and learn from one another.

What's next

The Recovery College grant, funded by the Government of Alberta, has been renewed for an additional three-year grant term: April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2027.

CMHA Alberta is engaging with a new partner organization in Medicine Hat. Anticipated onboarding is for Summer 2024 with a September 2024 program start.

Learn more about Recovery College at alberta.cmha.ca/recoverycollege.



The welcoming and laid-back atmosphere impacted me in a really positive way. It made me feel safe. I was able to cry and receive compassion. I know that that is a place I can go anytime (when they have sessions open) and will be greeted, welcomed, and valued."

— Peer Participant, Recovery College



Working Stronger



Working Stronger (WS) offers a comprehensive range of workplace mental health training opportunities designed to address the diverse mental health needs of organizations across sectors, including Certified psychological health and safety (PH&S) training.

The PH&S training certifies participants to implement the National Standard in their workplace by teaching them the process of creating a PH&S management system.

Highlights

This year WS facilitated 32 mental health training workshops and 8 PH&S certification courses, accommodating both in-person and virtual formats. In all, 80 people were trained in Psychological Health and Safety.

Alberta led a collaborative effort with CMHA Divisions across Canada to redesign the Certified Psychological Health & Safety training.

We also worked on developing year-long training partnerships with organizations, and found that organizations have become more interested in change-making around psychological health and safety in the workplace, as opposed to solely awareness-building.

What's next

The redesign of PH&S training will be launched this coming year and the Working Stronger Conference is taking place October 22 and 23, 2024.

Learn more about Working Stronger at workingstronger.cmha.ca.



The facilitators excelled in knowledge and professionalism. The information was important and the way it was displayed inspired me."

— Working Stronger Training Participant



Our team

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Building a compassionate and empathetic Alberta.

CMHA Alberta equips communities and Albertans with skills, knowledge, and supports for better mental health.



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