

City of Edmonton  
Community & Public Services Committee  
February 7, 2023

Edmonton

**CS01627 - Effects of  
Homelessness on the Healthcare  
Ecosystem**

# Effects of Homelessness on the Healthcare Ecosystem

## Presentation

### Outline

- Background Information
- Local Data
- Activity Underway
- Future Initiatives

## Background



**35,000** CANADIANS  
ARE HOMELESS ON A GIVEN NIGHT

*at least*  
**235,000**  
CANADIANS EXPERIENCE  
HOMELESSNESS IN A YEAR



**27.3%**  
ARE WOMEN



**18.7%**  
ARE YOUTH

THE NUMBER OF  
**OLDER ADULTS (50-64)  
AND SENIORS (65+)**  
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IS GROWING



*making up a combined*  
**24.4% OF SHELTER USERS**



**28-34% OF THE  
SHELTER POPULATION  
IS INDIGENOUS**

**4.3% OF CANADIANS  
ARE INDIGENOUS**



**FAMILIES  
STAY IN SHELTERS  
2X AS LONG  
AS INDIVIDUALS**

Edmonton

Source: Stephen Gaetz, Erin Dej, Tim Richter, & Melanie Redman (2016): *The State of Homelessness in Canada 2016*. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press

# Health Outcomes Homelessness

## 1. Physical health problems

- Infectious diseases (HIV, hepatitis, STIs)
- Chronic diseases (diabetes/hypertension)
- Injuries (assault, brain injury)
- Exposure (frostbite, hypothermia, etc)
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Foot and skin issues

## 2. Mental health problems

- Alcohol and drug dependence, elevated rates of cognitive impairment
- Personality disorders, psychotic illness, depression/suicide

## 3. Substance misuse issues

- Acute toxicity/overdose deaths/ hospitalizations
- Chronic exposure to harmful substances

Source: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/E/2019/eb-homelessness-health.pdf>

# Homelessness Amongst Gender-Diverse People

- Higher rates of homelessness amongst gender diverse (at a younger age)
- Difficulty accessing shelter spaces when needed and more likely to sleep in a public place

Source: *A Portrait of Homelessness Amongst Gender-Diverse People in Canada*, Women's National Housing and Homelessness Network

[https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/portrait-homelessness-amongst-gender-diverse-people-canada?utm\\_campaign=hh&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_term=26012023](https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/portrait-homelessness-amongst-gender-diverse-people-canada?utm_campaign=hh&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_term=26012023)

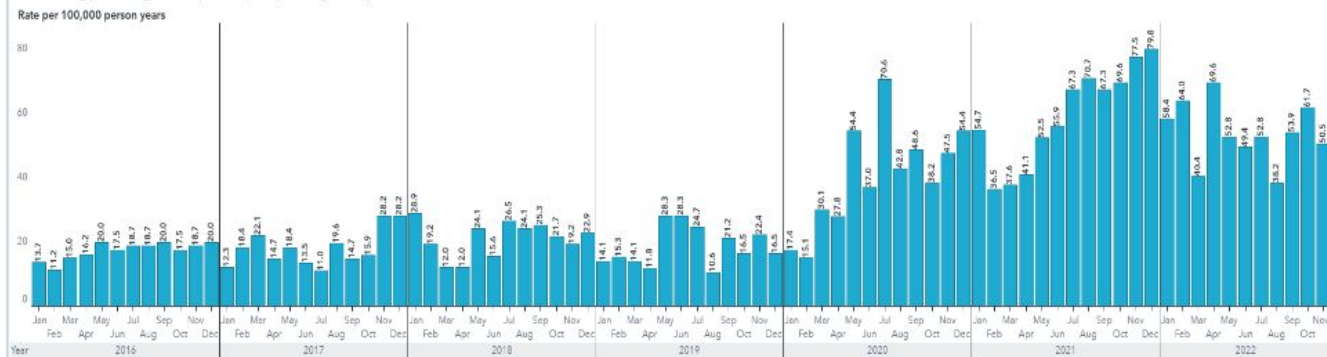
## Decreased Life Expectancy

- The average life expectancy of a homeless person in Canada is estimated to 39 years.
  - In Toronto, the median age of death was 48 years
  - In BC, the median age of death for a homeless individual in British is between 40 and 49 years of age
- Context: average life expectancy at birth in Alberta is about 81.5 years.
- Leading causes of death identified in BC were: poisoning (28%), suicide (12.4%) and exposure (3.6%).

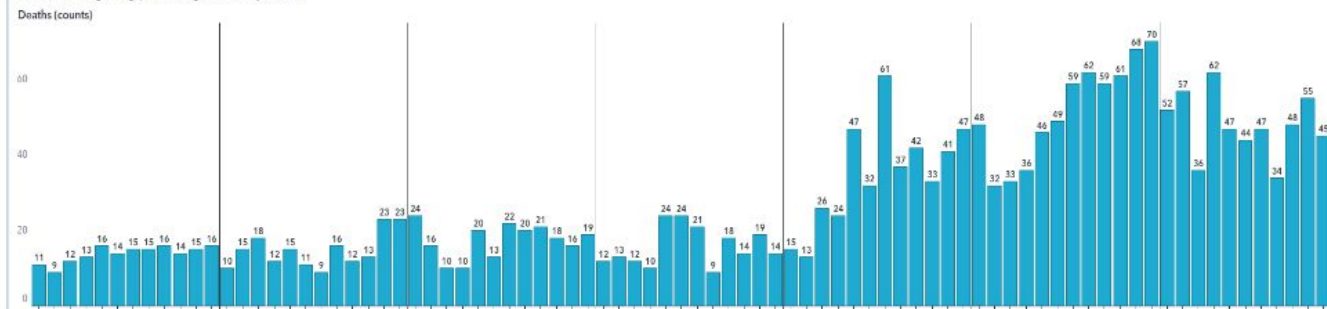
Sources: <https://www.charityintelligence.ca/images/Ci-Homeless-in-Canada.pdf>  
<https://www.toronto.ca/leadocs/mmis/2018/hl/bqrd/backgroundfile-113980.pdf>  
[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/megaphone/pages/7/attachments/original/1415231881/Dying\\_on\\_the\\_Streets\\_-\\_Homeless\\_Deaths\\_in\\_British\\_Columbia.pdf?1415231881](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/megaphone/pages/7/attachments/original/1415231881/Dying_on_the_Streets_-_Homeless_Deaths_in_British_Columbia.pdf?1415231881)

# Drug Poisoning Rates

Rate of drug poisoning deaths per 100,000 person years by month



Counts of drug poisoning deaths by month

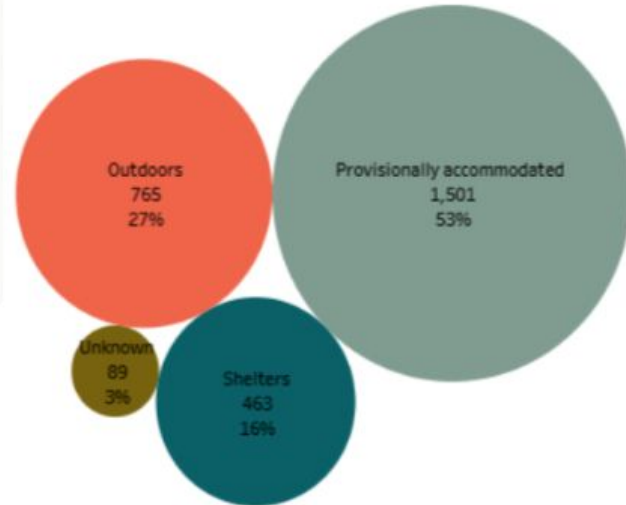


# Local Information

As of Date: Jan 30, 2023

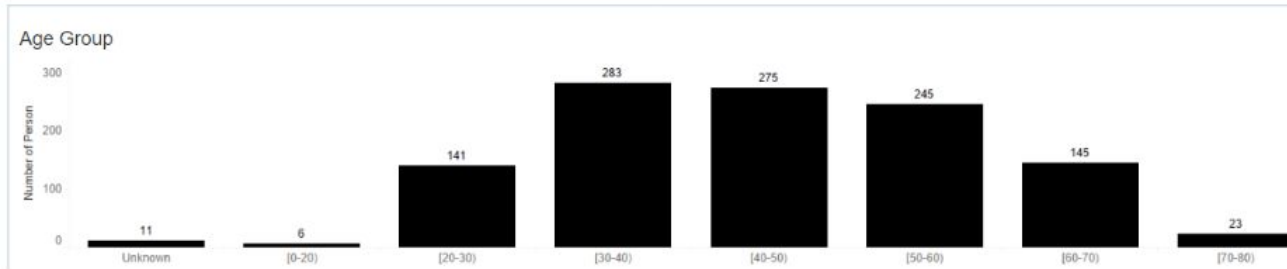


Experiencing homelessness **2,818**





## Local Data / Information

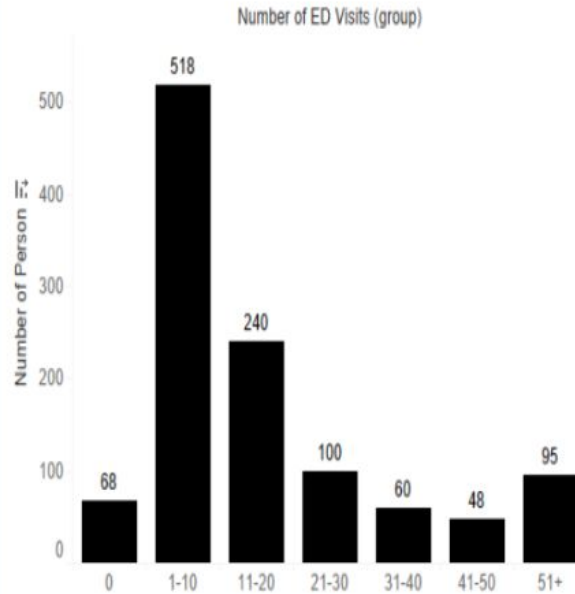


### Common Health conditions noted:

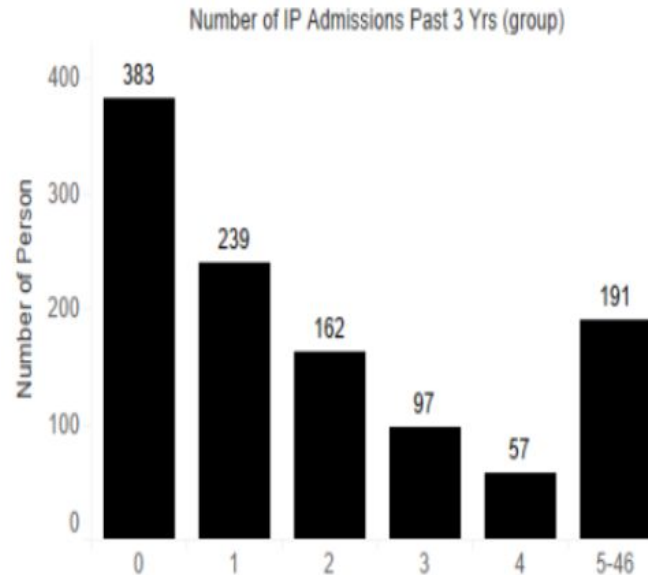
Drug/Alcohol Abuse/Dependence	80%
Skin Infection/injury/contusion	46-57%
Joint/Tendon disorder (incl. pain, sprain, strain)	46%
Poisoning/Adverse effects	46%
Open wound	39%
Pneumonia	30%

## Local Data / Information

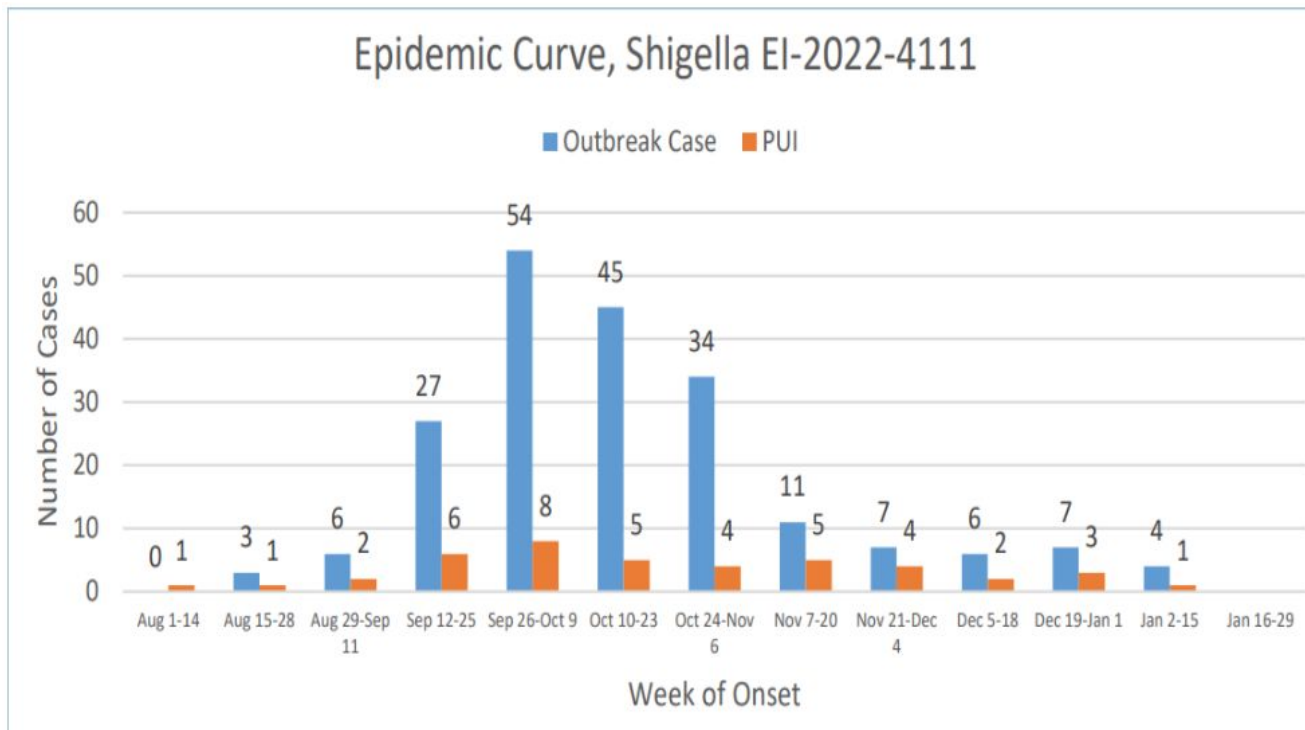
Number of ED Visits  
Fiscal Years 2019/20 - 2021/22



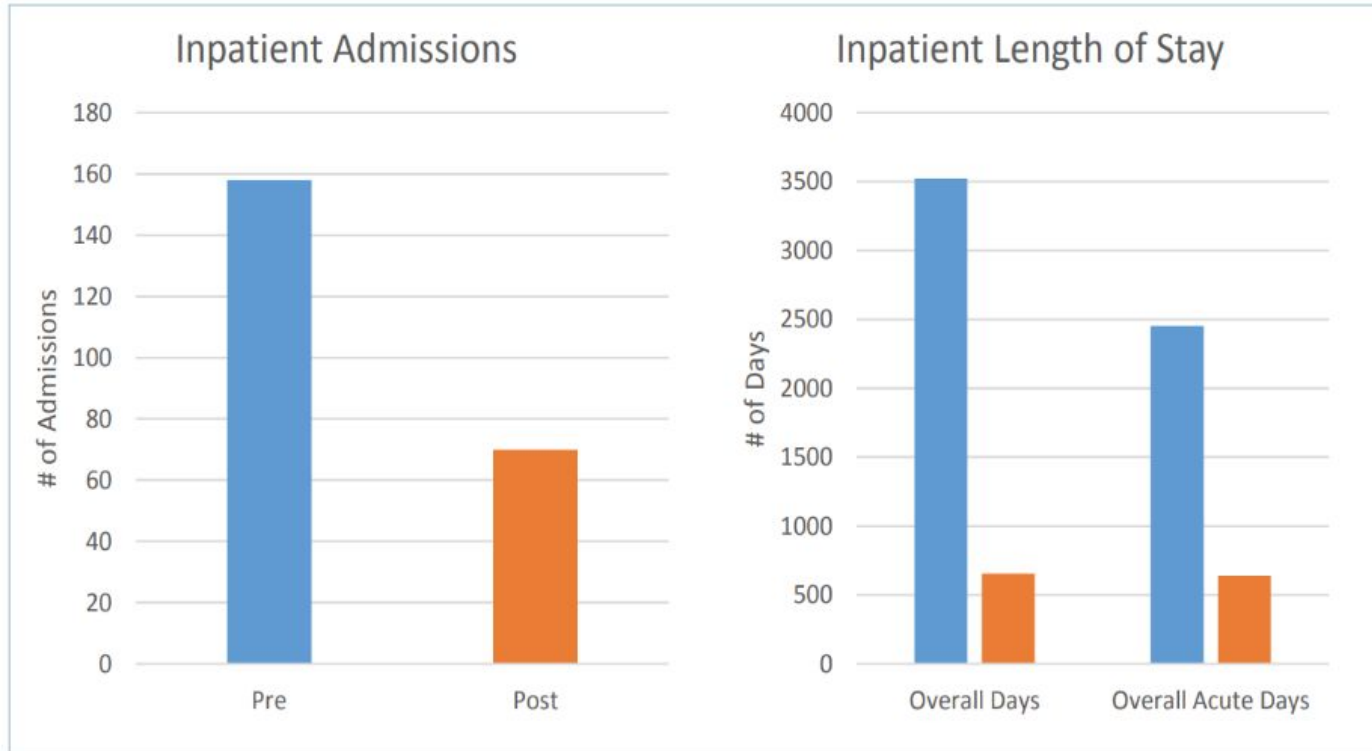
Number of Inpatient Admissions  
Fiscal Years 2019/20 - 2021/22



# Shigella



## Possible Solutions... Housing Options Work



- Increasing complexity and pressures on mental health systems
- All acute mental health admissions are triaged in our emergency departments.
- The numbers of acute mental health hospital admissions over the past 4 fiscal years are as follows:
  - 2018/19 – 4,635
  - 2019/20 – 4,982
  - 2020/21 – 5,789
  - 2021/22 – 6,028

## Activity Underway

- ED information
- Pregnancy support
- Youth support
- Mental Health
- Housing
- Medical Respite

## Future Activities

- A multi-factor challenge
  - Health, education, justice, addictions, social supports
  - Wellness, income, culture, gender
- Solutions needed to improve our overall community environments

## Solutions

- Prevention
- Strengthen system response and wrap-around care
  - Transitional supports
  - System integration
- Increase stable low-barrier housing matched to the client



# Thank you

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