

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION WITHIN CITY OF EDMONTON

Recommendation

That the February 26, 2024, Community Services report CS01745, be received for information.

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| Requested Action | Information | | |
| ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle | ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals | | |
| CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals. | Healthy City | | |
| City Plan Values | LIVE | | |
| City Plan Big City Move(s) | Inclusive and compassionate | Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities | Community safety and well-being |
| Corporate Business Plan | Serving Edmontonians | | |
| Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overdose Prevention & Response Teams • Strategy for Community Mental Health • Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness Update • Updated Affordable Housing Strategy • Downtown Core & Transit Safety Plan • Community Safety and Wellbeing Strategy • RECOVER Edmonton Urban Wellness Framework • Suicide Prevention Plan | | |
| Related Council Discussions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR_7031, Opioid Update, May 8, 2019, Community and Public Services Committee • CR_7699, Suicide Prevention Implementation Plan Annual Report, December 4, 2019, Community and Public Services Committee • CR_7460, City of Edmonton Youth Council - Opioid Crisis Information, September 4, 2019, Community and Public Services Committee • CR_7585, Youth Opioid Strategies and Youth Mental Health Survey Results, May 24, 2022, City Council • CS00329, Living Hope: A Community Plan to Prevent Suicide in Edmonton Annual Report, May 28, 2021, Community and Public Services Committee | | |

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- OCM01092, Controlled Drug and Substances Act Section 56(1) Exemption Process, April 11, 2022, Community and Public Services Committee
- CS01627, Effects of Homelessness on the Health Care Ecosystem - Verbal Update, February 7, 2023, Community and Public Services Committee
- June 19, 2023CS01220rev, Drug Checking Program - Collaboration with Homeless Serving Agencies - Update, June 19, 2023, Community and Public Services Committee
- CS01453, Multi-Disciplinary and Outreach Ecosystem, June 19, 2023, Community and Public Services Committee
- CS01242, Reducing Drug Poisoning Injuries, October 30, 2023, Community and Public Services Committee

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 7, 2023, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration work with Alberta Health Services to provide a report on mental health and addiction issues within the City.

Executive Summary

- While mental health issues will affect many Edmontonians over their lifetime, some groups will experience addiction and mental health challenges more often due to underlying risk factors. For many individuals, addiction and mental health issues are co-occurring.
- Alberta Health Services (AHS) is one of many providers of addiction and mental health services in Edmonton. AHS offers community programs, addiction detox and recovery programs, emergency services, centralized intake, inpatient programs, forensic psychiatry and opioid response services. Common presenting mental health issues in many AHS services include anxiety and depression, suicidal ideation, and substance-related problems.

REPORT

Alberta Health Services (AHS) promotes wellness and provides health care services across the province. AHS is just one provider of addiction and mental health services in the Edmonton Zone, along with many other community-based agencies and private clinics. For a fulsome list of resources available in the Edmonton Zone, citizens can contact 211 or visit the Canadian Mental Health Association's webpage¹.

The information presented in this report was prepared in collaboration with AHS, Edmonton Zone. The Edmonton Zone includes the City of Edmonton, Leduc County, St. Albert, Strathcona County, Sherwood Park, Sturgeon County, Fort Saskatchewan and Westview. Albertans and visitors from other provinces living outside these boundaries often travel to the Edmonton Zone to receive care.

For this report, the supports and services that AHS Addiction and Mental Health Edmonton Zone provides are presented in seven categories:

¹ <https://edmonton.cmha.ca/brochure/211-resource-lists/>

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1. Access 24/7
2. Emergency
3. Inpatient
4. Community Services
5. Addiction detox and recovery
6. Opioid response
7. Forensic psychiatry

Access 24/7

Since 2019, Access 24/7 has provided a single point of access to adult addiction and mental health community-based programs. Access 24/7 provides a range of urgent and non-urgent addiction and mental health services, including service navigation, screening, assessment, referral, consultation, crisis intervention, outreach and short-term stabilization. Clients can access services by phone or walk-in at the Edmonton Community Health Hub North (13211 Fort Road).

In 2022/2023, Access 24/7:

- Served 22,121 unique clients
- Answered 91,794 calls
- Received 3,825 walk-in visits leading to 9,207 referrals and 1,102 crisis outs.
 - A crisis out is a mobile service that provides crisis intervention, consultation, assessment, community or home-based stabilization services and urgent psychiatric clinic consultation.
- The top three reasons for referral are anxiety and depression, substance-related problems and post inpatient stay follow-up.

Emergency

AHS operates 13 emergency department (ED) sites across the Edmonton Zone. In 2022/23:

- Twenty three per cent of the approximately 35,000 addiction and mental health related visits to the ED were admitted to an inpatient bed.
- More than 90 per cent of addiction and mental health patients visiting the ED presented as urgent or higher. Eight per cent were classified as less urgent or non urgent.
- The top five presenting were depression/suicidal ideation², drug poisoning, substance misuse/intoxication, anxiety/situational crisis and altered level of consciousness.
- The top three presenting problems among children, youth and families were depression/suicidal ideation, drug poisoning and anxiety/situational crisis.

Inpatient

Inpatient addiction and mental health services are operated out of seven Edmonton Zone hospitals (four operated by AHS and three operated by Covenant Health). In 2023/23:

- There were 4,933 inpatient service admissions. This is a 20 per cent increase from the 2019/20 fiscal year.

² Note that depression/suicidal ideation is how this AHS data is categorized, but there are limitations in presenting depression and suicidal ideation as one category. For example, not all those who live with depression will have thoughts of suicide.

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- The top three diagnostic classifications for discharged patients were schizophrenia/schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder without electroconvulsive therapy and schizotypal/delusional disorder.
- The average length of stay for acute beds was approximately 35 days for adults and 18 days for children, youth and families.
- The readmission rate in 2020/21 was 6.42 per cent, compared to the national average of 14.20 per cent.

Community Services

AHS community mental health services provide outpatient assessment, treatment and follow-up for individuals experiencing addiction and/or mental health concerns. Clinicians work with individuals across the lifespan to assess and develop collaborative treatment goals and service plans. In 2022/23:

- 392,837 visits served 45,459 unique clients. The majority (96 per cent) of these visits were scheduled but walk-in visits were available. On average, 1,258 walk-in visits occurred each month.
- Community programs for children, youth and families served 11,720 unique clients in 2022.
- Face to face visits made up 64.11 per cent of the visits, 26.63 per cent were virtual and 9.26 per cent were groups.
- The top three visit types were individual intervention, group sessions and medication administration.
- 1,073 visits were by out-of-province clients, most commonly from British Columbia, Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan.

Addiction Detox and Recovery

In 2023, there were 384 addiction detox and recovery beds in the Edmonton Zone (125 AHS beds and 259 contracted/third-party provider beds).

- AHS operates detox and recovery programs out of five Edmonton Zone sites.
- Three youth programs include the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs (PChAD) Program, Youth Addiction and Mental Health Recovery Program and Youth Stabilization Program.
- Two adult centres include the Addiction Recovery Centre and Henwood Treatment Centre.
- 1,280 unique clients accessed one of the above mentioned addiction detox and recovery services in 2022/23.
- In addition to the services mentioned above, AHS Edmonton Zone provided over \$12.5 million to 14 service providers to offer detox and recovery services in the community (example: medically supported detox at George Spady). These 14 providers have a combined total of 259 beds for overnight treatment.
- An additional \$3.5 million was provided to three contracted service providers to offer addiction day treatment, including Supervised Consumption Services.

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Opioid Response

Alberta Health Services' response to drug poisonings includes both crisis intervention via Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and opioid dependency programming.

- From April 1 to September 20, 2023 there were 3,306 EMS patient interactions for opioid overdose/poisonings in the Edmonton Zone. This is a 78 per cent increase compared to the same time period in 2022.
- 50 to 60 per cent of all opioid related EMS interactions occur in central Edmonton neighbourhoods.
- Approximately 50 per cent of the patients that EMS interact with decline transport to the hospital.
- The Opioid Dependency Program (ODP) has four treatment clinics in the Edmonton Zone and had 26,615 visits from 1,528 unique clients in the 2022/23 fiscal year.
 - The virtual ODP program, which operates province-wide, had 14,034 visits from 4,967 unique clients.

Forensic Psychiatry

Forensic psychiatry centres offer comprehensive, multidisciplinary court-ordered assessments for the justice system and recovery and rehabilitation services for those patients designated under the Alberta Criminal Code Review Board.

- Alberta Hospital Edmonton operates 113 inpatient beds for forensic psychiatry.
- The top three diagnostic classifications for discharged adults are schizophrenia/schizoaffective disorder, schizotypal/delusional disorder and substance use with other states.
- 1,779 unique clients were served in 2022/23.
- Forensic Assessment and Community Services programs are community mandated programs for individuals who have confirmed or suspected mental health concerns and are in conflict with the law. These programs include general mental health clinic, mental health court, not criminally responsible, preventing intimate partner violence outpatient treatment, sexual behaviours program and diversion.

Community Insight

In a recent poll of Canadians conducted by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), 69 per cent of respondents believe Canada is in a mental health crisis³. The experience of mental health, much like physical health, exists on a continuum and will fluctuate throughout the lifespan. While individuals will have their own unique experience with mental health, some groups may experience addiction and mental health challenges or mental illness more often due to underlying risk factors. Many of these risk factors are related to the social determinants of health such as housing, poverty, discrimination, trauma and access to services. In any given year, about one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness⁴ and for many individuals the

³ Canadian Mental Health Association, "Canadians need more from their mental health system". <https://cmha.ca/brochure/canadians-need-more-from-their-mental-health-system/>

⁴ Canadian Mental Health Association, "Fast Facts about Mental Health and Mental Illness", 2021

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experience of addiction and mental health challenges are co-occurring. Approximately 20 per cent of Canadians with a substance use disorder also have a mental illness⁵.

The addiction and mental health system in Edmonton is made up of a multitude of supports and services provided across the continuum of care from prevention and promotion to specialized clinical care. Providers of addiction and mental health services include publicly-funded, not-for-profit and privately operated services. AHS and contracted agencies provide publicly-funded services across the continuum of care with specialized clinical services generally being delivered by AHS directly. Many community based not-for-profit service providers offer prevention, screening, brief intervention, referral and short term treatment in community settings.

As directed by the Council Motion, Administration prepared this report based on information provided by AHS on addiction and mental health in Edmonton (Attachment 1), and therefore only presents information related to AHS services and does not include insights from community-based agencies or private clinics.

GBA+

Data shows a notable disparity in the occurrence of drug poisoning injuries and deaths among distinct demographic groups. The highest number of drug poisoning deaths in 2023 were men aged 35-39⁶. Indigenous peoples are disproportionately impacted by drug poisonings⁷. However, it is important to note people from various backgrounds and circumstances use drugs, regardless of demographic factors, geographic location, socio-economic status, housing situation, etc.

Approximately one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness in any given year⁸, with members of some groups experiencing such challenges more often due to underlying risk factors experienced as a group and not because of any inherent characteristics of that group. In 2021, there were 180 reported suicides in the Edmonton Zone⁹; this translates to roughly 12.39 deaths per 100,000 in Edmonton compared to a national average of 9.9¹⁰. Some priority populations that have been identified in City of Edmonton initiatives such as *Living Hope: A Community Plan to Prevent Suicide in Edmonton* include Indigenous communities, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, first responders, survivors of suicide, middle aged men, newcomer and refugee communities and those living with a mental illness or addiction. Mental health and suicide data is available, however, it does not provide a complete picture of the impact or concerns. Mental health and suicide are complex issues impacted by inequitable access to services, unreliable data collection, overlapping biological, social and cultural factors and exclusion of vulnerable and non-majority groups within research.

⁵ Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy, 2023

⁶ Alberta Substance Use Surveillance System (updated January 2024)

⁷ Alberta Opioid Response Surveillance Report: First Nations People in Alberta (December 2021)

⁸ Canadian Mental Health Association, "Fast Facts about Mental Health and Mental Illness", 2021

⁹ Alberta Health, Interactive Health Data Application: Injury (updated August 2023)

¹⁰ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310080101>

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ATTACHMENT

1. AHS Addiction and Mental Health Data Summaries