What’s this project about?
The addiction and mental health system in Alberta is often described as a patchwork of programs that is fragmented and duplicated due to a lack of collaboration and coordination of services. Provincial data indicates that children, youth and their families are an underserved population in Alberta and that there is a discontinuity of care between primary, secondary, and tertiary care, as well as between ministries and sectors. The Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network (AMH SCN™) has launched the Child and Youth Integrated Pathways project to address this and respond to Valuing Mental Health: Next Steps recommendation that efforts should focus on system continuity by coordinating and integrating addiction and mental health supports and services for children, youth, and their families.

How will we do this?
This project will identify best practices within Alberta around integrated service delivery for children and youth between the ages of 6 to 18 with addiction and mental health issues. It will synthesize available evidence for the effectiveness of delivery models, and produce a resource to support evidence-informed decision making in service delivery and policy to improve outcomes for children and youth. The resource will serve as a guide to the implementation of service integration models adapted to local contexts and resources connecting care across multiple settings including schools, primary care, specialized community services, and acute care settings, and supporting children and youth in the transition between settings.

Where are we now?
We are currently in Phase One of this project. Phase One entails an evidence review which includes an environmental scan to identify programs in Alberta that have successfully delivered integrative care for children and youth with addiction and mental health issues in order to identify, define, and promote leading practices in the province. It also includes a literature review of current state of evidence in order to establish best-practice models of integration. The findings from the evidence review is being synthesized into a resource to inform the implementation of models of integration by zones, ministries, and organizations to increase integration between services and sectors in the province.

For more information on this project, please contact the Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network™: AddictionMentalHealth.SCN@albertahealthservices.ca