



PROVINCIAL ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH

Integrated Provincial Program

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Major initiatives and achievements, 2021-2022

Initiation of Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care Implementation

Provincial Addiction and Mental Health (PAMH) engages AHS Operational Zone leadership, physicians, front-line health care workers, community-based service providers, researchers, government ministries and departments, and many other partners to address shared priorities that enhance prevention, wellness, treatment, and recovery for Albertans with addiction and mental health concerns. The focus on a recovery-oriented system of care (ROSC) ensures that there is a coordinated network of services across the continuum of care to support Albertans with addiction and mental health needs.

Provincial Addiction and Mental Health has supported several projects and initiatives linked to ROSC, including:

Concept Analysis of Recovery from Substance Use: This was a student-led project to investigate, synthesize, and clarify definitions of recovery, with the aim to integrate the concept into a useful definition to be applied to substance use research and policy. This work has been presented to provincial stakeholders in AMH, and the publication is currently under review.

Expanding Opioid Dependency Program: AHS Opioid Dependency Programs (ODP) clinics have served more than 800 clients so far this year by providing medical outpatient treatment to clients dependent on opioids. Enhanced psychosocial supports are being offered in multiple zones.

Medical Detox and Residential Addiction Treatment Expansion (4,000 Spaces): ROSC has been enhanced through increased access to treatment spaces. 8,565 annual spaces have been established across the province for medical and social detoxification, residential addiction treatment, and residential recovery spaces. Investment also established new standard reporting metrics, contract expectations, and bed rates. The Residential Addiction Treatment Allowance (RATA) user fee was eliminated for Albertans seeking care.

Cannabis Use and Concern among Clients Seeking Substance Misuse Treatment: Administrative data from 2012 to 2018 were analyzed to provide an overview of demographics, healthcare utilization, and mental health co-morbidities in individuals accessing treatment for substance misuse in Alberta prior to the legalization of cannabis. This dataset has created a baseline to allow for research on the impact of legalization. This work has also been expanded into a new national research partnership, and has been leveraged to secure additional funding. [Learn more](#)

Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) and Virtual Anti-Violence Handbook

The DART program provides around-the-clock access to specialized domestic violence services, including crisis intervention, risk assessments, safety planning, and connections to follow-up supports (e.g., housing, legal aid, counselling). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for supports for individuals experiencing or at-risk for domestic violence increased alongside an abrupt shift to virtual delivery of services.



In 2021, the DART program expanded to 41 AHS/Covenant Health facilities (all five zones), increasing access to free, around-the-clock specialized support for Albertans experiencing domestic violence. Over the past year, DART received 144 referrals and plans to expand further to additional communities.

Dr. Stephanie Montesanti, with financial support from the PAMH Scientific Office, completed a series of virtual stakeholder dialogues with representatives from health, social care, community, justice, government, and people with lived experience to discuss: 1) successful virtual care interventions; 2) opportunities and challenges in delivering these interventions; 3) how to narrow the digital divide for providers and clients; and 4) key considerations for the implementation of virtual care solutions that are feasible and acceptable to domestic violence and sexual assault clients. These discussions led to the development of a [handbook for virtual delivery of domestic violence and sexual violence interventions](#).

Other highlights

ELITE Internship Program

The Experiential Learning in Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship (ELITE) Program for Black Youth is an internship run through the University of Alberta and matches Black students with host organizations to develop hands-on skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Two ELITE interns were hosted by PAMH and learned qualitative analysis skills as they worked on the eMental Health project. They contributed to ongoing analysis to determine how outcomes can be improved for an online platform that supports youth mental health.

This project has emphasized issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and has explicitly focused on highlighting youth voices from a diverse range of perspectives, while participation in the internship program has worked towards increasing diversity in research and in AHS.

Impact on health and care in Alberta

PAMH supports many facets of addiction and mental health care to positively impact health outcomes, increase access to addiction and mental health services, and address capacity through innovation and collaboration with health and community partners. For example:

- 158 physicians completed CanREACH training in the past year, learning to identify and treat pediatric mental health conditions in the community
- 107 new Psychosocial First Aid trainers were trained in the past year
- PAMH was actively involved in over \$3 million of grant-funded research



Actions and areas of focus

- Expand community-based and home care options in the most appropriate setting
- Improve sustainability and integration of addiction and mental healthcare in communities and across the service continuum
- Leverage technology and innovation to improve patient and family centred care
- Focus on health promotion through increased prevention of disease and injury

PROVINCIAL ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH

Grants and Publications



43

Peer-reviewed Publications



12

Workshops & Presentations

Outcomes and Impact

430

Alberta physicians have been trained to identify and treat pediatric mental health conditions in the community, **increasing system capacity for families seeking mental health support**



\$3.0M

Research Grants



253

Research members

Expansion of the DART program & residential addiction treatment and detox, **increasing access and system capacity for families seeking domestic violence services and medical detox/addiction support**

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