

# Inventory of AHS Suicide Prevention Programs, Activities, Resources and Initiatives: Executive Summary

## Background

The purpose of the inventory (2018) is to provide an understanding of the depth, breadth and range of activities related to suicide prevention that AHS is involved in across the province as well as to highlight any potential gaps. The inventory will help inform suicide prevention programs and services moving forward as part of the new five year *Injury Prevention Action Plan (2018-2023)*.

The inventory (2018) includes information on programs, initiatives, activities and resources that are delivered or funded by AHS. These activities are intentionally and directly focused on preventing suicide in Alberta.

## Key Findings

In total, 141 activities were reported across the province, 74% of which are led by AHS.

- The majority of activities reported are:

Category of Activity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Health Promotion or Education (59%)</li><li>• Training (13%)</li><li>• Mental Health Services (6%)</li></ul>
Delivery Setting/ Method:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community-based (52%)</li><li>• School-based (17%)</li></ul>
Target Population – Age-Group:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General population without specification of a certain age group (54%)</li><li>• Youth aged 13 to 24 (23%)</li></ul>
Target Population – Specified Audience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teens or young adults (24%)</li><li>• Indigenous audience (18%)</li></ul>

- All of the zones report activities in the area of Health Promotion or Education, while only North Zone, Central Zone, and provincial departments report activities in the area of Training.
  - Example of trainings include: Road to Mental Readiness, Mental Health First Aid, Safe TALK and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

## Program Highlights

### Partnerships, Committees & Coalitions

- Partnerships, committees and coalitions are noted across the province with the exception of the Calgary Zone.
- Examples include:
  - Central Zone: Regional Suicide Prevention Council for Central East
  - South Zone: Regional Suicide Prevention Council Medicine Hat
  - Edmonton Zone: Suicide Advisory Council
  - North Zone: Suicide Task Group
  - Provincial: AHS Provincial Suicide Prevention Direction-Setting Committee

### World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD)

- WSPD is an international awareness day observed on September 10 each year to strengthen commitment and action to prevent suicide. Each year, zones and provincial departments are involved with activities, including campaigns to promote awareness of suicide prevention during the week of WSPD.



## Community Helpers Program (CHP)

- CHP is provided through the AHS Provincial Injury Prevention Program. CHP is a peer helping program designed for youth and young adults between the ages of 12 to 30 and is offered across all zones. CHP is delivered in community-based settings including, but not limited to schools, post-secondary institutions, community organizations, and workplaces that employ youth and young adults.
- As of November 2017, there are a total of 17 communities across the province receiving funding for CHP. This includes the recent expansion and enhancement of CHP to two new community organizations, and six new project-based CHP activities for existing CHP community organizations.

*“Community Helpers has truly made an impact on me. I’ve always had the drive to want to help, but never had the tools. Now I am equipped to help my friends. A friend of mine attempted suicide, which was traumatic for both of us. Thanks to Community Helpers, I have the skills to help them and lead them on a more productive and healthy road.” - Student, Northern Lights School District*

## Honouring Life (formerly AYCES)

- Indigenous Health provides funding to 20 communities to implement Honouring Life, but has a reach to at least 15 other First Nations and all 8 Métis Settlements. Two of 20 Honouring Life program communities provide services to off-reserve and urban Indigenous families and youth.
- In November 2017, the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Aboriginal Youth and Community Empowerment Strategy (AYCES) Working Session and Forum was held in Red Deer. Alongside program coordinators, Elder Morris Little Wolf and other honoured Elders presided over a (re) naming ceremony for AYCES. The new name, Honouring Life, reflects the program's objectives and its communities: Respect. Identity. Resiliency. Empowerment.

*“I think this program will allow youth to become aware about how much power they possess that will allow them to make that decision to become involved in the community and to help one another.” - Forum participant*

The forum brought together coordinators, youth and Elders from seventeen communities, Settlements and First Nations across the province, and included a notable presentation by Dr. Darien Thira on the foundational concept of *Community is the Medicine*, which focuses on bringing culture back to the community.

## Limitations

- Limited changes or additions made to the inventory template sent to stakeholders:
  - Lack of confirmation of existing activities and limited responses to new categories.
- Inventory may not represent an accurate picture of all activities due to a limited sample of stakeholders. Varying levels of response rates from each zone.
- Information self-reported from selective sample:
  - Results may not be comparable due to subjective understanding of suicide prevention terms used. No definitions included to encourage common language.
  - Inability to accurately validate all activities AHS is directly delivering or funding, or participating via in-kind contributions.

## Recommendations

- To ensure a more accurate reflection of ongoing suicide prevention initiatives that AHS is involved with across the province:
  - Update Inventory collection template to be more user-friendly.
  - Explore a regular Inventory review cycle, increasing the length of time between updates.
  - Explore a dissemination process that enhances accountability for respondents.