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PROTECTING SASKATCHEWAN BY INCREASING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS TREATMENT

The 2026-27 Provincial Budget makes significant investments to increase access to mental health and addiction treatment in Saskatchewan. The budget will invest in building capacity by opening more treatment spaces and creating a new youth detox site, support individuals in specific stages of their recovery journey, and make the system easier to access so patients and families can receive the help they need.

A record investment of \$673.7 million in the 2026-27 Budget will support mental health and addictions programs. This is a \$49.9 million or 8.0 per cent increase from 2025-26.

The 2026-27 Budget provides over \$23 million more for targeted investments that will create about 200 more addictions treatment and recovery spaces in multiple Saskatchewan locations, expand resource access to mental health and addictions supports, continue the transition to a recovery-oriented system of care and better meet client needs to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Of this increase, \$10.8 million will:

- Accomplish the commitment to add 500 addictions treatment spaces by March 2027;
- Establish a six-bed secure youth detox site at Calder Centre in Saskatoon; and
- Expand Rapid Access Counselling services for adults.

"We have entered the midway point of our ambitious five-year *Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions* that will double treatment and recovery spaces and make major program improvements to benefit patients and families," Mental Health and Addictions Minister Lori Carr said. "There are more than 300 new addictions treatment spaces now operational in Saskatchewan with about 200 more spaces planned over the next 12 months to successfully fulfill our 500-space commitment and connect more patients to help closer to home."

This year's budget will fund the creation of a six-bed secure youth detox site at Calder Centre in Saskatoon, doubling Saskatchewan's secure youth detox capacity. This initiative addresses a key recommendation in the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth's *Desperately Waiting* report and reduces the need for families to travel long distances for care.

"This new Saskatoon location will follow a recovery-oriented approach through detox, stabilization and treatments found in one location to improve outcomes for young people requiring intensive support," Carr said.

The 2026-27 Budget dedicates a \$9.6 million funding increase to support a Recovery-Oriented System of Care, which strengthens the focus on treatment and recovery by developing and expanding options to better meet the needs of people working toward recovery.

This increase will also fund Complex Needs Facilities in Prince Albert and North Battleford to assist individuals in crisis with a safe place to stabilize while monitored for negative effects of drugs or alcohol. These facilities protect and support intoxicated individuals with high potential of being a danger to themselves or others. The individual in crisis is kept safe and, once stabilized, help is provided to connect them to interventional support services and programs.

This funding will also operationalize the first phase of *The Compassionate Intervention Act*, which is an addiction treatment model used in rare cases where adults with severe and life-threatening addictions unable to ask for help will receive treatment.

"This year's budget supports the recovery model work underway that recognizes the individual journey toward sobriety," Carr said. "By meeting patients where they are at, whether it's in crisis, withdrawal management or requiring inpatient, outpatient, virtual and family-based services, the care is better adapted to meet individual needs."

The 2026-27 Budget provides a targeted increase of \$3 million for initiatives that improve the system as a whole. This investment supports better access to addiction services by continued development of a Central Intake and Navigation System, allowing patients to self-refer to addiction treatment. This budget also supports province-wide implementation of the Virtual Access to Addictions Medicine (VAAM) program. VAAM provides more timely and convenient care, particularly for patients in rural and northern communities who may face barriers due to their location or inability to travel.

Individuals can receive assessment, treatment, and support through videoconferencing or telephone. VAAM also partners with local health services such as laboratories, outpatient counselling, and pharmacists. In combination, these initiatives reduce barriers to treatment, making it easier for people to find, access and connect to addiction services, and supporting a more coordinated, patient-centred experience.

"These investments are improving the entire system, making it easier for people to access supports when and where they need them," Carr said. "By adopting an '*every door is the right door*' approach within the addictions' space, we can connect to more people reaching out for help who are prepared to make significant life changes."

The remaining \$26.5 million is for increased utilization of hospital-based services, physician visits and prescription drug costs.



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