

EMBARGOED RELEASE
Mar. 19, 2025
2:15 PM

Health 25-4366

BUDGET DELIVERS MORE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES

A record investment of \$623.8 million in the 2025-26 Budget supports mental health and addictions services with a \$52.8 million, or 9.2 per cent, increase from 2024-25. This budget delivers on critical supports and investments, making services more accessible to individuals, improving coordination of care, getting people the treatment they need in a timely manner and transitioning to a recovery-oriented system of care.

Of the overall Health budget, 7.7 per cent is directed to fund mental health and addictions initiatives with \$486.7 million dedicated to mental health and \$137.1 million for addictions. A new targeted funding increase of \$20.1 million will expand access to mental health and addictions services and care for Saskatchewan people.

An investment of \$15.8 million will deliver on the Government of Saskatchewan's commitment to add 500 addictions treatment spaces across Saskatchewan - double the amount now available in the province. Currently, 221 addictions treatment spaces are operational, with plans to have up to 400 of the 500 dedicated spaces ready by the end of 2025-26.

"We will build on the success of our *Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan* by supporting hundreds of newly established physical and virtual addictions treatment and recovery spaces in seven communities stretching from Estevan to Pinehouse," Mental Health and Addictions Minister Lori Carr said. "This year, we will unveil expansion plans to ensure Saskatchewan residents can access these services when and where they need them to overcome addiction and live healthy lives."

A further \$4.3 million in new, targeted funding will:

- Increase access to addictions medicine across the province by implementing a new Virtual Access to Addictions Medicine (VAAM) Program and adding supports for the existing Opioid Agonist Therapy Program in the province;
- Support the development of a central intake and navigation system that patients can contact directly to self-refer for treatment;
- Fully fund the HOMEBASE Integrated Youth Services Site and open the final site at Sturgeon Lake First Nation;

- Fund two additional five-bed homes for youth with chronic mental health and addictions issues;
- Facilitate the transition to a recovery-oriented system of care model, which provides an improved focus on treatment and recovery; and
- Increase funding for the Bridgepoint Centre for Eating Disorder Recovery.

The 2025-26 Budget will provide \$6.0 million in new capital funding for expansion of Complex Needs Emergency Shelters (CNES) in new communities. There are currently two 15-bed CNES pilot projects in Regina and Saskatoon that provide individuals in crisis with a safe place to stabilize while being monitored for the negative effects of drugs or alcohol.

"These shelters have proven to be effective in protecting and supporting individuals who are intoxicated and presenting as a danger to themselves or others," Carr said. "These facilities keep the individual in crisis safe and help transition them to support services and programs. We are exploring other potential locations that are best served by these facilities, as several Saskatchewan communities are interested in creating a Complex Needs Emergency Shelter to help individuals struggling with addictions and in need of these interventions."

The remaining \$27.0 million is for increased utilization of hospital-based services, physician visits and prescription drug costs.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Media Relations
Health
Regina
Phone: 306-787-4083
Email: media@health.gov.sk.ca

