

## What's this project about?

The Canadian Research and Education for the Advancement of Child Health (CanREACH) program is an innovative solution to build the needed intellectual and educational capacity in primary care providers through the delivery of an evidence-based 6-month mini-fellowship training program in pediatric mental health.

Most children with mental health disorders in Alberta are not getting *appropriate* treatment, nor are they getting it *efficiently* - when and where they need it. One in five children meets the diagnostic criteria for a mental health disorder, equating to over 150,000 Albertans, yet less than 20% of those receive mental health services. The cost of this gap in care is high. In addition, primary care providers are not adequately trained to identify and treat pediatric mental health concerns, yet they deliver two thirds of mental health services. And to support the small fraction of children identified, there are few specialists available with only 25% of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists required for the population of Alberta and most of them situated in urban settings.

The CanREACH program helps to address these issues.

## How will we do this?

Piloted in the Calgary Zone from 2014-2019 with measurable success, the scaling of CanREACH throughout the province of Alberta is a critical next step. The scaling of this program will include the establishment of an Edmonton hub which will enable the program to deliver eight fellowship sessions from October 2019 to December 2021, four in each hub (Calgary and Edmonton). A provincial recruitment strategy will ensure primary care providers from all AHS Zones across the province can participate and have better access to this training. Over the next two years, it is anticipated that the program will train 240 family physicians and pediatricians in Alberta. In addition, a provincial evaluation of the program will be conducted.

## Where are we now?

A second hub in Edmonton has been established and three new CanREACH faculty members have been recruited. Two cohorts have been completed since October 2019 – one in Edmonton and one in Calgary – for a total of 45 fellowships. An additional two cohorts are scheduled to occur between April and June 2020.



A provincial evaluation strategy for the scaling of CanREACH has been approved and will measure: 1) improved knowledge and practices, 2) changes in referral practice, 3) cost-benefit of training physicians, and 4) improved patient experiences.

The CanREACH initiative has recently been awarded the Children’s Healthcare Canada Award for Organizational Leadership” in December 2019. It has been previously acknowledged with awards from AHS for “Excellence in System Transformation”, along with national recognition from the College of Family Physicians of Canada’s “Continuing Professional Development” program and the 2016 Alberta Health Services, Department of Psychiatry – Excellence in System Transformation Award.

### Who is involved?

The CanREACH program is licensed from The Reach Institute. The CanREACH program delivery team, the AMH SCN and AMH Provincial Data and Evaluation Team have committed to supporting the provincial scale of this program while working closely with the Zones, Primary Care and other key stakeholders.

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