

Provincial Injury Prevention Program
Community Helpers Program

Community Helpers Program Executive Summary April 1, 2018- March 31, 2019

July 2019

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This summary has been prepared by Provincial Injury Prevention Program.

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Executive Summary

The Community Helpers Program (CHP) is a peer helping program offered to youth ages 12-30 that focuses on mental health promotion and suicide prevention. The CHP is supported by the Provincial Injury Prevention Program and 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. Enhancing community capacity for mental health through an assets based approach, the CHP helps identify and support individuals in communities whom others naturally turn to for support (“Community Helpers”). The CHP can support these individuals by offering training to enhance their natural helping aptitudes. Training topics include communication, self-care, coping with stress, connecting people to professional supports, handling crisis situations, and suicide awareness. In addition to developing individual competencies, the CHP familiarizes identified Community Helpers with available community and professional supports. This connection bridges formal and informal supports in the community, enabling Community Helpers to refer peers and family to professionals when needed.

Originally the CHP was a Government of Alberta grant funded pilot initiative in five Alberta communities. In 2016, the CHP became an operationally funded program within Alberta Health Services’ Provincial Injury Prevention Program and has proliferated to 17 service provider organizations delivering CHP. In addition, another six service provider organizations deliver the CHP by accessing other funding sources outside of the Provincial Injury Prevention Program. In February 2019, the Provincial Injury Prevention Program secured three-year grant funding through the Government of Alberta’s Provincial Action Plan for Youth Suicide Prevention (2019-2024) to add an additional three grant funded service provider organizations. These three new organizations are located in rural communities and specifically support LGBTQ2S+ youth and young adults and/or new Canadian, immigrant, refugee youth and young adults. With these three additional organizations, the Provincial Injury Prevention Program now funds a totally of 20 service provider organizations and supports an additional six organizations to deliver CHP across the province.

Program highlights for the April 1, 2018-March 31, 2019 period include:

- 1,610 individuals completed the nine core modules of the Community Helpers Program
- Three additional service provider organizations were awarded three-year grant funds through the Government of Alberta’s Provincial Action Plan for Youth Suicide Prevention (2019-2024)
- The Provincial Injury Prevention Program received 17 proposals and 15 inquiries over the past year from community organizations who want to deliver the program in their communities - these proposals and inquires could not be accommodated due to resource constraints
- The CHP is increasingly mentioned in local and provincial suicide prevention strategies
- Partnerships with the CHP continue to be built and strengthened at the zone and provincial levels