



## **Taking Care of Your Mental Health During the Pandemic**

*Released on April 1, 2020*

Mental health services and supports are readily available to Saskatchewan residents who need them during the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent spending estimates, the Ministry of Health is investing \$435 million in mental health and addictions services, an increase of \$33 million.

The Government of Saskatchewan and health sector partners are working together to ensure that services are available, particularly to vulnerable populations and that they comply with public health requirements limiting close contact.

“Living through this uncertain and distressing time has caused some level of worry for us all,” Premier Scott Moe said. “Just as people should be caring for their physical health during this pandemic, it’s important to pay attention to our mental health too. Whether you’re coping with the loneliness of self-isolation, concerned about the health of your loved ones or worried about what the future may hold, there are mental health supports available to help you through this difficult time.”

All Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) mental health inpatient units for adults, children and youth remain open for admissions as needed. Community mental health sites remain open, offering most services by phone. However, they have maintained capacity to assist clients and patients in person if necessary. Group-based services have been discontinued, but clients and patients are being contacted by phone. The SHA continues efforts to reallocate resources to areas of critical need, such as mental health. Regular intake phone lines are operating, including HealthLine 811 which has mental health services available providing 24/7 assistance or referral.

Family Service Saskatchewan, in partnership with the SHA, supports 23 mental health walk-in clinics that are now offering services by phone in communities across the province, in light of the need for social distancing.

Other mental health resources available to Saskatchewan residents include:

- The Farm Stress Line (<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/programs-and-services/farm-stress-line>) provides support for farmers and ranchers and is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week. To get help, call 1-800-667-4442.
- Kids Help Phone (<https://kidshelpphone.ca/>) offers professional counselling, information and referrals by phone, text or online chat. It's confidential, free and available 24/7.
- Mobile Crisis (<http://www.mobilecrisis.ca/mobile-crisis-helpline/>) centres are located across Saskatchewan and operate 24/7.
- Employee and Family Assistance Programs can assist with mental health supports and counselling for qualifying employees and their dependents.

Ministries across government are providing mental health resources and supports. For example:

- The Ministry of Education continues to offer Mental Health Capacity Building support for staff and students in five schools during school closures, through online and social media platforms.
- Ministry of Social Services staff are supporting clients, service providers and Approved Private Service Homes. All CBO agencies continue to offer counselling by phone or virtual technology.
- Indigenous Services Canada Mental Health Therapists are available by phone or Telehealth to residents of First Nations communities.

### **Volunteers**

People are encouraged to provide assistance within their communities to friends, neighbours or family who may need assistance with things like picking up groceries or other needed supplies.

Premier Moe encouraged people to remember the difference between physical distancing and social distancing.

“To stay healthy mentally, we all need to connect with our friends and family – but safely, by phone or online as much as possible,” Moe said. “That’s the best way we can protect ourselves and each other.”

To learn more about mental health supports and COVID-19 in general, visit [www.saskatchewan.ca/COVID19](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/COVID19).

Public inquiries about COVID-19 may be sent to [COVID19@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:COVID19@health.gov.sk.ca).

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For more information, contact:

Health Regina ~ Phone: 306-787-4083 ~ Email: [media@health.gov.sk.ca](mailto:media@health.gov.sk.ca)