

## Community Services Briefing to

Community Development Committee  
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## Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy Update

### PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

Every individual, household, community, and workplace in Calgary is directly or indirectly impacted by mental health and addiction. These shared experiences catalyzed the mental health and addiction sector to come together with The City to develop a strategy and action plan with the shared goal of creating hope and strengthening supports. The sector (comprised of provincial services, local agencies, non-profits, grassroots groups, and funders convened by The City), subsequently created *The Community of Connections: Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Community Strategy and Action Plan*, referred to as "the Strategy" (Attachment 1). This community framework advances actions towards that shared goal.

Funding for and implementation of Strategy actions by all sector participants contributes to a thriving and vibrant community where people feel safe, welcome and resilient, reducing the need for costly interventions. The City's role in funding and supporting the implementation of the Strategy's actions complements but does not duplicate provincial services. Calgarians receiving provincially delivered services such as treatment, clinical or medical interventions, benefit from municipally connected community services to support coordinated access, resulting in resilience and wellbeing.

This briefing and its attachments provide an update on the Strategy's impact to Calgarians through its funded programs and implementation of the Strategy's actions.

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### Overview

The Strategy includes three action areas: *Being Well*, *Getting Help*, and *Staying Safe*. *Being Well* fosters wellbeing in community and increases understanding of mental health and addictions to reduce stigma; *Getting Help* prioritizes community supports through increased access and navigation to services, when and where people need them; and *Staying Safe* supports crisis response and crisis recovery that increases safety for all. Programs and services that support *Being Well* and *Getting Help* are funded through Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Funding Framework (Attachment 2) and programs and services advancing *Staying Safe* are funded by the Community Safety Investment Framework (Attachment 3).

#### Highlights of 2024

Throughout 2024, Administration focused on advancing the recommendations and opportunities from the [2023 Evaluation](#), shared with Council via Briefing (C2023-1348) *Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy Implementation Update*. The evaluation, which measured both outcomes of investments and the extent to which systems and processes have been implemented, validated the need for The City's role as a data and research steward, investor, convener, and communicator. Confirming Administration actions support the sector and improve strategy implementation in alignment with the three action areas. Administration's recent work in advancing the strategy is summarized below and in more detail in Attachment 4.

- Commissioned a [survey](#) of Calgarians' mental health, addiction, and treatment experiences. This is the first survey of Calgarians' experiences, providing valuable insight relevant to programs, services, and researchers. Survey highlights included a gained understanding that:
  - 58% of Calgarians report they have felt the need for mental health care at some point in their life and 70% of those needed care within the last 12 months;

- 2 in 5 Calgarians who sought help had trouble accessing the support they required;
  - Slightly less than half are satisfied with mental health and addiction programs and services in Calgary.
- Invested in and supported a collaborative funding model which supported 64 agencies in 2024 with funding from the two funding frameworks. Attachment 5 provides a detailed list of the funded programs and the Strategy's action areas they advance.
- Convened an *Update to Community* in October, attended by over 200 sector participants. Approximately 92% agreed the event provided them with valuable information on the Strategy and future advancements for the sector and the people served.
- Advocated to provincial ministries to advance high level systems change by coordinating and identifying needs across departments.

## How Calgarians Are Better Off

The City's approach to Strategy implementation complements but does not duplicate provincial services, ensuring the sector works together to meet the evolving needs of Calgarians. The impact of funded programs and how they create hope and strengthen supports for Calgarians is summarized on page 2 of Attachment 4. Administration remains committed to monitoring and reporting on sector developments, progress and impact to Council, community and Calgarians, for the continuous advancement of the Strategy.

## Next Steps

Administration will continue to advance the Strategy's actions through funding evidence-informed programs and services, while also communicating, convening, and championing research and data, all in support of the sector and the people they serve. Through this work Administration is fostering a strong local sector that is resilient and innovative, ultimately meeting the Strategy's goal and The City's vision of making life better every day.

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2023
2. Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Investment Framework
3. Community Safety Investment Framework
4. Mental Health and Addiction Strategy Impact Summary
5. 2024 Investments

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General Manager Katie Black concurs with the information in this Briefing.