

# Mental Health and Addictions



## The Issue

28% of adult Manitobans deal with mental health issues while suicide is the second leading cause of death amongst Canadian youth. For years, Manitoba has spent less than half of recommended amount on mental health supports. The result:

“Manitoba stands out as the highest or very high on almost all [substance use/addiction and mental health] need indicators, including those related to health, social and justice-related factors. Behind the ‘numbers’ lies a huge financial drain on the province as well as an often tragic physical and emotional drain on communities, families and individual Manitobans. Taken together, the overall level of need clearly signals a call to action.” Manitoba’s Mental Health and Addictions Strategy (also called the Virgo Report)

## The Province’s Role

The Provincial government is responsible for delivering all health care. The Federal and Provincial government signed an agreement in April 2019 for an extra \$182 million over the next five years in health funding. Some of this must go towards improving mental health and addiction treatment. The Virgo Report made recommendations in these areas:

Increased access across the province, timely treatment through clinics, expanded Telehealth access (counseling by phone or webcam for example), more flexible lengths of stay in treatment, increased community-based treatment, the integration of addictions and mental health services for children and youth under one umbrella, 8 per cent of the total addictions and mental health budget go toward prevention, the need for more accessible and culturally appropriate services for Indigenous people

## Questions to Ask

- What do you and your party intend to do with these recommendations? Would you double mental health spending to get to recommended amount?
- What community based resources do you know of and how will you support them?
- What is your understanding of harm reduction approaches\*?
- Given that our mental health and addictions courts are more successful (addictions court graduates have an 11% re-offending rate compared to the 66% for those returned to custody) than traditional courts, what do you and your party intend to do to support them?

***\*Harm Reduction: A public health approach aimed at reducing the adverse health, social and economic consequences of at-risk activities such as substance abuse.***