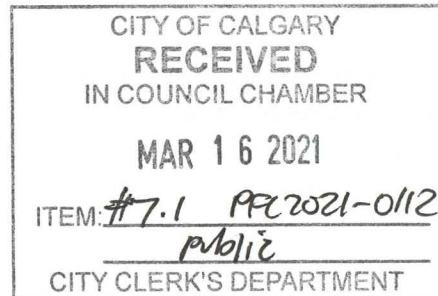


March 10, 2021

His Worship Naheed Nenshi
Mayor
The City of Calgary
Office of the Mayor
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB, Canada T2P 2M5



Dear Mayor Nenshi:

I am writing on behalf of the staff and Board of Calgary Reads to voice our support for the City of Calgary's development of a community-wide strategy on mental health and addiction designed specifically for our city, and The Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction Stewardship Group entrusted with developing it.

All of us have known someone who struggled with mental health issues and I am glad, when completed, the strategy will help more people navigate the resources available to them and find the right supports at the right time.

At Calgary Reads, our focus is of course on young children, and the science tells us that when it comes to mental health and wellbeing—as with reading—the early years set the tone for future success. Children and youth are at-risk of mental health challenges in higher numbers than most people may realize, and the Covid-19 pandemic has only made the matter worse by placing greater stress and anxiety on everyone: parents and family members, educators, and children.

The key stats on children's mental health are cause for continued vigilance:

- Over 80,000 young Albertans suffer from some kind of mental illness that they may struggle with for the rest of their lives (AHS).
- Prevalence rates of mental health problems in very young children are difficult to determine — but are estimated to range from 10-20% (Mental Health Commission of Canada).
- About 70% of mental health challenges have their onset in childhood or youth (CMHA).
- The first six years are critical for human growth, development, and mental health. Promoting healthy interactions, relationships, and mental health from the beginning can help to improve health and well-being later on (Mental Health Commission of Canada).

In recognition of child mental health and with the support of a Change Can't Wait grant, Calgary Reads fast tested a children's mental health book bundle called the "Comfort Collection." We extend our thanks to Council and Administration for responding quickly to the pandemic and making two rounds of this funding available to grassroots organizations.



Calgary Reads also partners with Families Matter Calgary to empower families so that caregivers and children build resilience and thrive. The latter recognizes the role reading plays in developing social-emotional learning and resilience; through Families Matter's family support workers, we supply children's books and tips for parents to vulnerable client families.

Thank you for your leadership and Council's ongoing support of improving mental health outcomes for Calgarians. I have every confidence that when a community like ours tackles social issues in a strategic and collaborative way, we are setting ourselves up for success!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steacy Pinney".

Steacy Pinney

CEO



YMCA Calgary
Association Services
101 3 St SW
Calgary AB T2P 4G6
403-237-9622
ymcocalgary.org

March 10, 2021

His Worship Naheed K. Nenshi
Mayor
The City of Calgary
Office of the Mayor
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB, Canada T2P 2M5

Dear Mayor Nenshi,

On behalf of YMCA Calgary, it is my privilege to provide this letter of support to you and your team as you realize the City of Calgary's development of a community-wide strategy on mental health and addiction designed specifically for our city, and for The Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction Stewardship Group leading this work.

With over 119-years as a charity serving this community, YMCA Calgary recognizes that community-based solutions can be effective and powerful. We know that the unique and collaborative approach undertaken to build this strategy, which YMCA Calgary was proud to participate in, will succeed because it has been approached in the right way:

- It recognizes the universality of mental health challenges for every person in our community at some time during each of our lives
- It gives individuals and organizations agency to be part of the solution, so more people can obtain help faster
- It recognizes that being well, getting help, and staying safe should be a right for every Calgarian and it is the responsibility of organizations, including our charity, to work towards this better future

YMCA Calgary is on our own journey to provide more intentional services, programming and opportunities to improve the mental health of the hundreds of thousands of Calgarians we serve. This includes a Mental Health Strategy embedded in our soon-to-be released 10 Year Strategic Direction that supports people's mental health in service to them being happy and healthy. Our strategy will:

- Increase belonging and decrease social isolation
- Help people build positive relationships
- Building resiliency and coping skills, and decrease anxiety
- Develop social-emotional learning skills, particularly in children and youth
- Increase a positive sense of self, with an intentional focus on Indigenous culture
- Demonstrate the positive effects of exercise and physical activity on mental health
- Engage our staff and volunteers as well as the people we serve
- Lead to a decrease in the stigma associated with mental health challenges

We know this is an ambitious list to accomplish for our YMCA. That is why it is so important and necessary for us to collaborate to accomplish these goals. The Community Strategy on Mental Health and Addiction provides a framework and gives us alignment with others striving for similar impact.

Building healthy communities



YMCA Calgary
Association Services
101 3 St SW
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ymcocalgary.org

I'd like to congratulate the many individuals and organizations who have worked so thoughtfully to build this strategy. Now, I'd like to encourage City Council to invest appropriately, in all ways, in putting this strategy in motion to the benefit of all our citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Doram'.

Shannon Doram
President & CEO
YMCA Calgary



March 10, 2021

Calgary Public Library is pleased to provide this letter of support in relation to the Calgary Mental Health and Addiction Community Strategy and Action Plan.

Calgary Public Library is a network of 21 locations offering library services, community space, outreach, and access to technology and programs to Calgarians of every age, ability, ethno-cultural group, and socio-economic status. The vision of the Library is *potentials realized* and the Library seeks to achieve that vision by connecting people to ideas and experiences, inspiration, and insight. In operation for over a century, the Library now has over 735,000 active members and its physical and virtual assets are each accessed over 7 million times each year.

The Library is proud to support positive mental health outcomes in our community in numerous ways, by providing access to current and evidence-based health resources and information and by partnering with other organizations to deliver wellness programs and make mental health services more accessible to communities, particularly those facing economic, social, or digital barriers.

As a key piece of social infrastructure in our City providing much needed space and digital infrastructure for crucial community conversations, the Library is a platform for community members and agencies to connect with each other and expand and enhance their work to promote positive mental health. The Library is particularly focused on supporting families in promoting strong early learning experiences for children, as we know these promote longer term success and resilience in individuals and our community.

The Library recognizes the crucial nature of this work, particularly considering the mental health crisis in our community that has been exacerbated by the global pandemic. We stand ready to assist particularly in the context of the Action Plan's strategic framework of working together to create hope and strengthen support for everyone. In partnership with the City of Calgary and local agencies, the Library is pleased to provide this letter to underline its commitment to promoting positive mental health outcomes in our City through collective action and cooperation.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Asberg".

Mark Asberg



United Way of Calgary and Area
600 - 105 12 Ave SE
Calgary, AB T2G 1A1
T: 403-231-6265
F: 403-355-3135

calgaryunitedway.org

Reg. Charity Number: 13022 9750 RR0001

March 12, 2021

Mayor Naheed Nenshi
The City of Calgary
The Office of the Mayor
P.O. Box 2100, Station M (#8069)
Calgary AB T2P 2M5

themayor@calgary.ca

Re: Letter of Support for the Community Action on Addiction and Mental Health (CAMHA) Strategy

Dear Mayor Nenshi,

United Way of Calgary and Area is pleased to provide this letter of support for the **Community Action on Addiction and Mental Health (CAMHA) Strategy**. As a member of the CAMHA stewardship group, I would like to congratulate all members of the stewardship group; the co-chairs, Karen Gosbee and Dr. Chris Eagle; Mayor Naheed Nenshi and Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart; and, The City of Calgary's administration staff for playing pivotal leadership roles in the development of the strategy. We are proud to have been involved in the development of such an important piece of work for our city and its people.

We recognize that addressing Calgary's addiction and mental health issues is a complex undertaking that requires collaborative, multi-sector action—we need to work across organizations for solutions that save lives. Active engagement of all impacted, including the diverse individuals and families living with these challenges, is the foundation and critical first step in a successful implementation process.

Our organization will exemplify leadership, meaningfully contribute, and leverage our multifaceted expertise to the implementation process, particularly to develop strategic partnerships and person-centred initiatives that support the resilience and growth of those in need. We plan to take the strategy to heart in our work to ensure Calgarians are supported in the best way possible.

United Way of Calgary and Area's mental health and wellness approach is aligned with CAMHA's. We see great opportunity for impact with our initiatives and investments, from Community Hubs, Planet Youth and the many agencies that we support who deliver on mental health outcomes. We are proud to be involved in Change Can't Wait! supporting and finding innovative approaches to new solutions to this complex issue.

We know that prevention and early intervention investments build the capacity of individuals and families, which in turn enables them to live to their fullest potential in any context or situation, enriching our community as a whole.

We endorse the CAMHA strategy and hope that Calgary's City Council will provide the necessary resources and supports for a well-coordinated, collaborative implementation approach. This will enable us collectively to achieve the vision to create hope and strengthen support for Calgarians leading to a resilient and caring community where everyone thrives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Young".

Karen Young
President and CEO

CC: Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart

EMAILS OF SUPPORT (as of March 16, 2021): **12**
