

**MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES
IN MANITOBA**

The Manitoba government is focusing investments on three main areas as part of its continuing commitment to improving mental health and addictions services. They are:

- children and youth with complex, multi-system needs;
- addictions, mental health and trauma support; and
- mental health promotion and universal supports.

The initiatives announced today include:

Integrated Youth Services

The NorWest Youth Hub is an integrated service centre for youths ages 14 to 24. It offers a range of services, either by drop-in or by appointment, in the following areas: youth mental health counselling, Indigenous youth counselling and support, youth addictions counselling, youth employment services and support, youth primary health care, and youth recreation and training opportunities.

The government's investment will pay for additional counselling and psychologist appointments, primary care visits and mental health support group sessions. In total, the additional investment will allow the number of youth served at the NorWest Youth Hub to increase by approximately 150 per year.

The Manitoba government will gauge the success of the NorWest Youth Hub to determine whether to expand the model to other locations in the city and province.

The government's new investment in integrated youth services addresses three recommendations made in the VIRGO report including:

- significantly enhance capacity of substance-use addictions and mental health services for children and youth;
- develop a provincial plan for the scale-up of the youth hub model, or similar models of integrated youth services; and
- immediate funding priority to the expansion of services for children and youth.

Project 11

Established by the True North Youth Foundation, Project 11 is a school-based mental health promotion program for students in kindergarten to Grade 8. It includes virtual and in-person lessons and activities that are designed to improve mental health awareness and positive coping strategies for students.

Healthy Child Manitoba has found Project 11 to be effective in improving the mental well-being of participating students while reducing negative behaviours such as bullying. Students benefit from this school-based mental health promotion program, which aligns with Manitoba's English Language Arts and Physical Education and Health Education curriculum.

Approximately 5,000 additional students will benefit from the province's investment in this program, which meets the following VIRGO report recommendation:

- immediate funding priority to the expansion of services for children and youth.

Thrival Kits

The province will partner with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) to expand the distribution of Thrival Kits to grades 4 to 6 students across Manitoba. The kits were distributed in 2017-18 as part of a pilot project to fifth grade students in several Winnipeg schools, as well as schools in the Red River and Sunrise school divisions. Developed by the CMHA through a partnership with the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth and Manitoba teachers, Thrival Kits incorporate evidence-based mental health practices such as mindfulness meditation, personal reflection, stress reduction and coping strategies, as well as interpersonal skills development.

Up to 15,600 students are expected to benefit from distribution of these kits, which are introduced to children through activities led by their teachers throughout the school year.

This initiative aligns with three different VIRGO recommendations:

- expanded community outreach and promotion and support for the use of self-management tools;
- flexibility of community-based service delivery; and
- immediate funding priority to the expansion of services for children and youth.