



SASKATOON POLICE SERVICE

TO: Jo Custead, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Troy Cooper
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2021 March 30

SUBJECT: Vulnerable Persons Unit
2020 Annual Report

FILE #: 2,012-9

ISSUE:

The Vulnerable Persons Unit is comprised of the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) Police and Crisis Team (PACT), HUB, Strengthening Families and Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH). The Unit was established in 2019.

RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

Reduce acutely elevated-risk situation that individuals, families or environments face in the community.

DISCUSSION:

The Vulnerable Persons Unit was established in 2019 to coordinate established, non-traditional units within the SPS that provide a collaborative approach to elevated risk situations in the community. The Unit consists of PACT, Hub, Strengthening Families and CFMH. By having these Units under the same umbrella, information and harm reduction strategies flow more effectively between them as there is significant crossover between the subject individuals and their needs.

Police And Crisis Team (PACT)

PACT is a client-centered community safety model developed through the collaboration of three agencies - SPS, the Saskatchewan Health Region and Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service, Inc.

The PACT teams provide immediate police response to persons in need that are experiencing significant mental illness and/or addiction issues. They improve public and personal safety by providing collaborative and effective crisis intervention/assessment while sharing valuable resources and information with one another.

Outcomes include:

- enhanced immediate response and service to persons experiencing mental health/addictions crisis;
- reduce arrests for disturbance calls due to psychosocial crisis;
- decrease volume and length of stay to emergency departments of avoidable mental health and addictions presentations;
- the ability to successfully resolve, de-escalate and triage to appropriate level of service;
- improve public and personal safety by providing collaborative and effective crisis intervention;
- the ability to direct individuals and family members to community support agencies and medical resources, transport to emergency services or facilitate shelter needs;
- follow up by phone or in person to ensure the well-being and safety of the community members.

PACT members are dispatched to any call that is mental health related (e.g. attempted suicide, self-harm, welfare check, suspected mentally ill, etc.). They are also responsible for the apprehension of individuals with a Mental Health Warrant.

PACT Staffing:

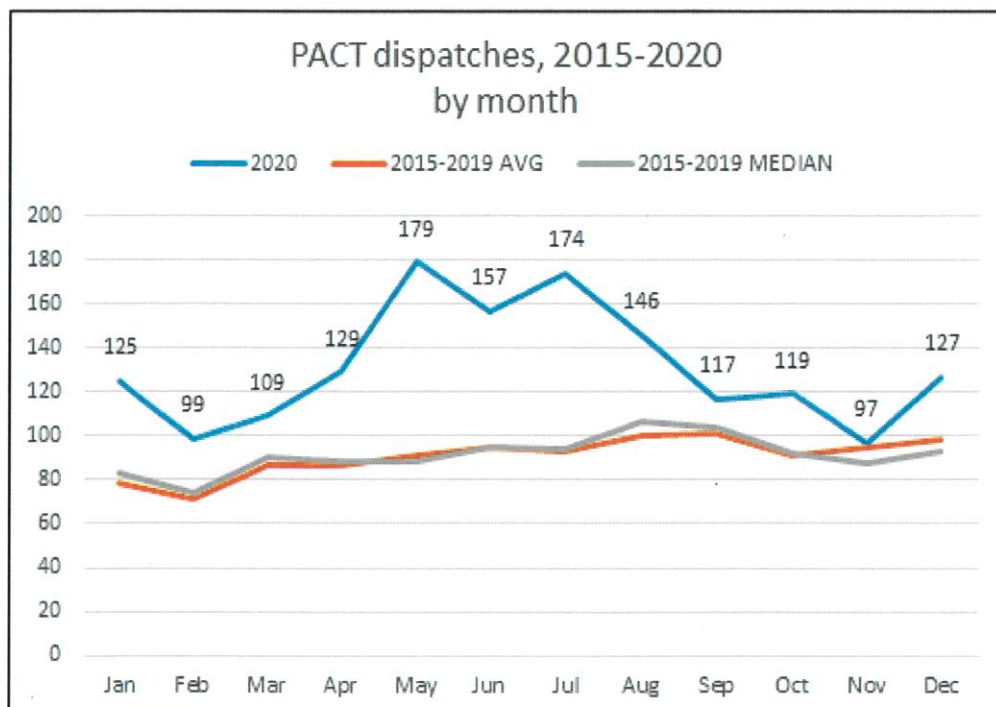
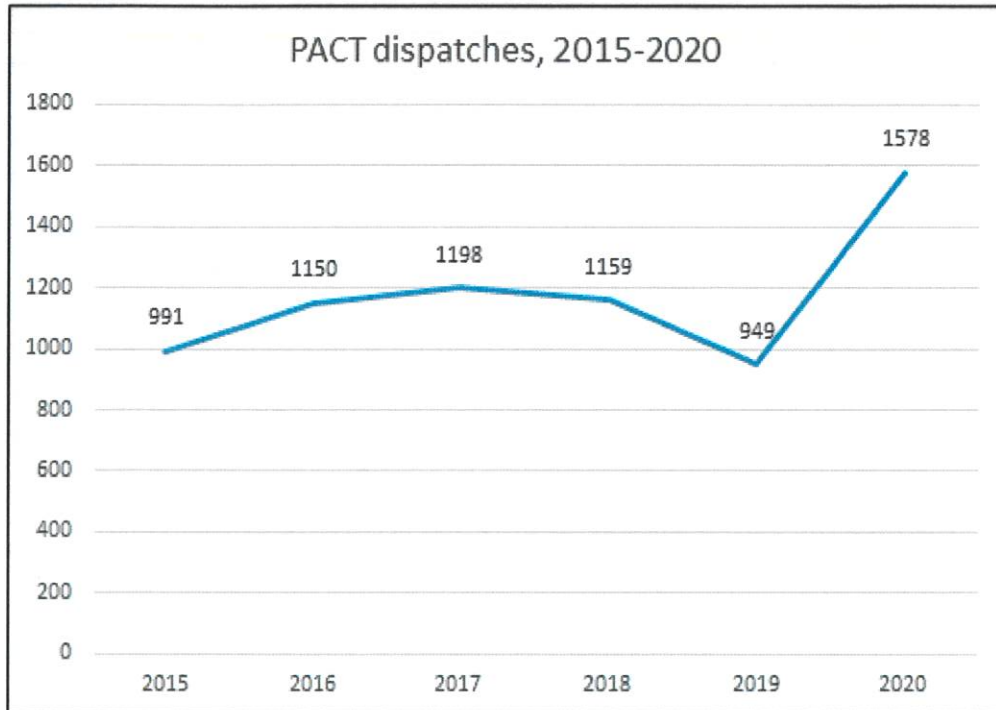
PACT is a specialized team made up of a SPS (SPS) officer and a mental health social worker from the Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service. The SPS officers' positions involved in PACT are provincially funded and the Saskatchewan Health Authority funds the social workers.

There are currently two PACT teams that work a 4-day rotation of 2 day shifts (0700-1700) and 2 evening shifts (1300-0100). There is only one team on per 24-hour period.

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PACT Statistics:

In 2020, PACT dealt with 1578 dispatched calls. This was an increase of 66% from 2019 and demonstrated an overall monthly increase over a five-year average.



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The program objectives are to streamline and coordinate access to community resources, reduce emergency department (ED) visits, and when appropriate, divert mental health and addictions (psychosocial crisis) from the justice system. PACT’s goals are to reduce repeat calls for service and connect individuals with resources and supports.

Diversions by Year

Year	ED Diversions	Arrest Diversions	Total Diversions
2015	124	20	144
2016	144	34	178
2017	194	19	213
2018	163	33	196
2019	143	15	158
2020	278	32	310
Total	1046	153	1199

The associated services and unit cost as provided by the Ministries of Health, Social Services, Justice and Medavie Services are as follows:

- emergency room visit (\$800)
- ambulance trip (\$325)
- ambulance assessment (\$325)
- acute psychiatric hospitalization day (\$1000)
- medical hospitalization day (\$550)
- brief detox day/night (\$210)
- social detox day (\$210)
- contact with police (\$100)
- police detention day/night for intoxication (\$450)
- incarceration day – non –related to intoxication, SPS data only (\$135)
- taxi ride – Ministry of Social Services (\$25)

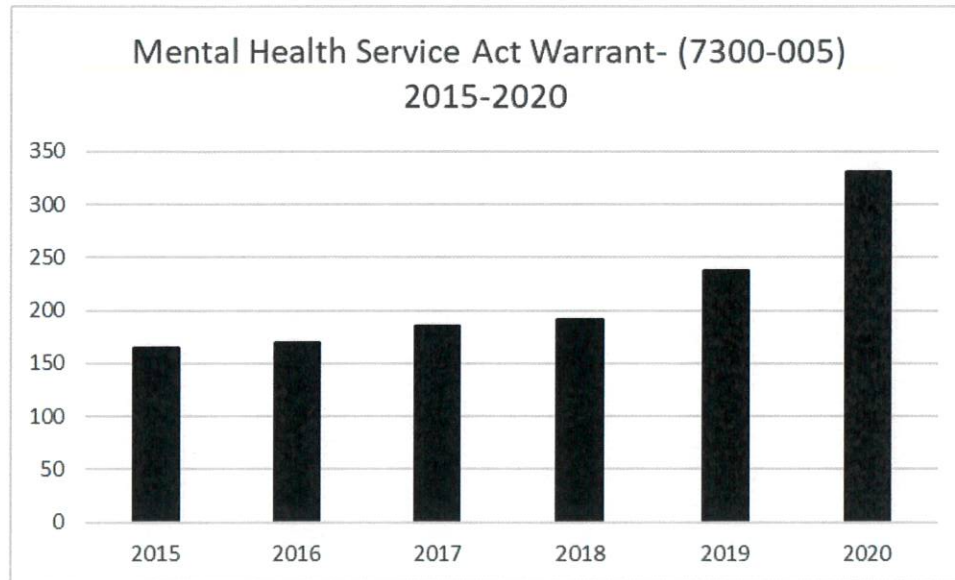
As you can see, the diversions are reducing costs and providing a needed service for people suffering with mental health and addiction in the community.

One of the main interactions PACT has with people experiencing mental health issues are apprehensions under *The Mental Health Services Act*. For the 2020 reporting period, 330 mental health warrants were completed.

Mental Health Warrants (2020)	
Form C	107
Form A	30
Form G	4
Form H.7	189
Total MHW	330

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When reviewing mental health warrants over a five-year period, an increase of 100 % is observed between 2015 and 2020 – 165 vs. 330. This is significant and reflects the mental health of the citizens in the community.



PACT Current Initiatives & Challenges:

Currently, the PACT team is working two twelve hour shifts with each of the four platoons. In the future, our hopes include having four operational PACT teams whereby each team is committed to one platoon. With the increasing mental health and addiction calls, this would alleviate the pressure on our calls for service to patrol officers, divert arrests in our cells, divert individuals from the emergency departments and allow for the reduction of acutely elevated-risk situation that individuals, families or environments face in the community.

Saskatoon HUB:

Under the umbrella of the Community Safety & Wellbeing (CSWB) portfolio and the Ministry of Corrections and Policing, the Saskatoon Hub has been in effect since April 1, 2014.

The Hub Committee works in an outreach capacity with other agencies to identify individuals or families facing elevated risks that can't be solved by a singular agency (silo approach). By connecting with other agencies and sharing information, a wrap-around approach can be taken to provide supports and services to reduce elevated risk. Our Hub Committee meets every Tuesday and Thursday morning.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and redeployment of the Hub Constable in March of 2020 the Hub Table was not operational from March to June 2020. Since returning, they are adhering to all protocols and have implemented a virtual meeting format (WebEx) for those who are not able to attend in person.

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The agencies that participated at the Hub Table in 2020/housing include:

- Saskatoon Police Service
- Ministry of Social Services – Child and Family Services
- Saskatoon Health Authority – Mental Health and Addiction (both adult and youth)
- Community Corrections
- Ministry of Social Services – Income Assistance
- Saskatoon Public Schools
- Greater Catholic Schools
- Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD)

The Hub model is a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach with an emphasis on integrating human service, sharing data, and measuring success along the way.

HUB Staffing:

SPS has a dedicated, full time, provincially funded constable assigned to the Hub. This is the only full time, dedicated person as the other agencies provide delegates to assist while maintaining their main position – essentially doing HUB related follow up from the side of their desk. The Hub constable was appointed as the chairperson for the Hub table in 2017 and continued throughout 2020. This role requires the coordination of administrative tasks, coordinating the Hub model, serving as the Hub table liaison to multi-agency initiatives, liaising with the Government of Saskatchewan’s Community Safety and Well Being (CSWB) Implementation Team, providing education and training to the community, and serving as the Hub table spokesperson. Additional responsibilities include maintaining the provincial database with all of the data entry for Saskatoon discussions, creation of reports to identify trends related to specific risk factors, and attending (scheduling) door knocks with HUB agency representatives. These often result in identifying systemic issues within our community and working with a wide range of organizations and community groups to develop strategies to address issues that will provide a safe and secure environment.

HUB Statistics:

Hub had 79 discussions presented in the 2020 year. SPS played a primary role at the Hub table by being the lead agency with 30 referrals and participating in 78 of the 79 discussions.

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Breakdown of Agency Referrals

January 01 2020 – December 31 2020

Agency	# of Discussion (lead agency)	Discussion Assistance	% of Involvement in 79 Discussions
Saskatoon Police Service	30	48	97.5%
SHA-Mental Health and Addiction	4	52	70.9%
MSS-Child and Family Services	6	29	44.3%
Saskatoon Public Schools	19	11	39.2%
Community Corrections	7	10	21.5%
MSS-Income Assistance	3	24	32.9%
Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools	6	9	19%
CLSD	4	18	27.8%

***Discussion Assistance does not include discussion when agency is the lead

Each of the discussions were categorized as either an individual or a family. In 2020, 29 (36.71%) of the discussions were identified as individuals and 50 (63.29%) were identified as families. Contact (door knocks) with the family or individuals was made 144 times with Cst. Robson, the SPS Hub Chairperson, attending 121 of the door knocks.

Demographics Breakdown by Type, Age Group and Sex

January 01 2020 – December 31 2020

Type	Discussions	Percentage
Family	50	63.29%
Person	29	36.71%
Total	79	100.00%

Age Group	Discussions	Percentage
12-17 Years	3	10.34%
18-24 Years	8	27.58%
25-29 Years	4	13.79%
30-39 Years	3	10.34%
40-59 Years	7	24.24%
60+ Years	3	10.34%

Sex	Discussions	Percentage
Female	14	48.28%
Male	14	48.28%
Unassigned	1	3.45%
Total	29	100.00%

Risk Variables for Saskatoon Discussions

When discussions are brought forward, they are separated into risk variables. These variables are further broken down into risk factors to allow us to accurately identify the focus of the risk variable. In 2020, 387 risk factors were identified in the 79 Discussions. Of these risk factors, the highest risk variables identified were: mental health, criminal involvement, and basic needs not being met/housing (tied).

January 01 2020 – December 31 2020

Risk Variables	Number of Risk Factors	Percentage
Mental Health	73	18.86%
Criminal Involvement	37	9.56%
Basic Needs	29	7.49%
Housing	29	7.49%
Drugs	24	6.20%
Missing School	24	6.20%
Cognitive Functioning	23	5.94%
Alcohol	19	4.91%
Antisocial/Negative Behavior	19	4.91%
Parenting	15	3.88%
Physical Health	15	3.88%
Suicide	11	2.84%
Gangs	10	2.58%
Physical Violence	9	2.33%
Self-Harm	8	2.07%
Negative Peers	6	1.55%
Unemployment	6	1.55%
Crime Victimization	5	1.29%
Emotional Violence	5	1.29%
Missing/Runaway	5	1.29%
Threat to Public Health and Safety	5	1.29%
Poverty	4	1.03%
Supervision	3	0.78%
Social Environment	2	0.52%
Sexual Violence	1	0.26%
Total	387	100%

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TOP Risk Factors from 2017-2020

Top Risk Categories										
Year	Top 1		Top 2		Top 3		Top 4		Top 5	
2017	Mental Health	91	Drugs	59	Criminal Involvement	40	Housing	39	Alcohol	34
2018	Mental Health	125	Drugs	61	Criminal Involvement	51	Housing	51	Alcohol	35
2019	Mental Health	81	Drugs	42	Criminal Involvement	41	Housing	33	Alcohol	33
2020	Mental Health	73	Criminal Involvement	37	Basic Needs	29	Housing	29	Missing School	24

From the chart above, it can be observed that over the last four years, mental health continues to be the number one risk factor, with drugs and criminal involvement following closely.

HUB Current Initiatives & Challenges:

The Saskatoon Housing Authority joined the Saskatoon Hub table in December, 2020. They bring with their agency a new outreach housing team that supports the housing of our most vulnerable and difficult to house population. Housing was seen as one of our top five risk categories so their participation was welcomed!

Challenges faced by the HUB table related to the barriers presented by COVID restrictions. All participants preferred in person meetings but adhered to their agencies policies and protocols. Over half of our table continued to attend meetings in person. Amazing work was being accomplished, despite the logistical issues presented.

Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families Saskatoon is a skills-based training program for high-risk teens and their families. Program goals are to improve parenting, communication and social skills within the family unit.

Strengthening Families began when the SPS initiated a prevention initiative for children, youth and families who were at risk of criminality and gang activity. A committee comprised of stakeholders (SPS, City of Saskatoon, MSS – Child and Family Services, Saskatoon Health Region, Saskatoon Public Schools and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools) completed a proposal to the National Crime Prevention Centre. Funding was approved from the Federal Government and is in place until October, 2021. (SPS is bridging until December 31, 2021)

The Strengthening Families program has been implemented in over 36 countries since it was developed in the 1980's. It is a 14 session (1 evening per week) evidence based parenting skills, social skills and family training program designed for high-risk families. Trained facilitators

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engage youth and caregivers during each session with the primary target group being youth between the ages of 12-17. This program is designed for the entire family with other children between the ages of 6-11 receiving a light lesson plan. Sessions include family connection and practice time. Follow-up sessions (boosters) are provided at approximately six months and then one year after the initial program to reinforce skills previously learned.

The program is designed to reduce barriers and provide benefits to the families attending. These include providing:

- transportation to the session
- childcare during the sessions
- incentives for participation during the sessions in a “family game atmosphere” (these include prizes such as gift card for groceries, pizza nights, phone minutes, movies and coffee)
- a meal prior to each session where each family sits for a “family supper”
- a graduation ceremony recognizing the success of the families at the end of the program

Referrals to this program can be made by anyone or any agency and are submitted online in a very simplified format. Factors that are considered when making a referral to this program include:

- family history of problem behavior or parent criminality
- family management problems, poor parental supervision and/or monitoring
- poor family attachment or bonding
- anti-social behavior, delinquent beliefs and involvement/drug dealings
- favorable attitudes toward drug use/early onset of alcohol and/or drug use

Online referrals are screened by the Strengthening Families team and meetings are conducted with the families. Both the adult and the child must agree to attend. Families are screened based on an intake guide created by the Strengthening Families Program, which allows for the highest risk families to be placed at the top of the list to attend.

Three programs are offered a year – January, April and September. The programs operate out of the White Buffalo Youth Lodge.

Strengthening Families Staffing:

The Strengthening Families team is comprised of two full time staff – a Program Coordinator, Lois Preete and a Constable, Matt Lambe. All positions are funded by the Federal Government until October, 2021.

Strengthening Families Statistics:

Since the start of the first Strengthening Families Saskatoon program, 326 family members have attended at least one program session.

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Two 14-week programs were started and completed in the 2020 calendar year. Although the number of families that graduate from each program appears low, this is on par, if not greater than similar high-risk programs across Canada.

January 2020 - Program 8

- 11 families were accepted (13 caregivers, 11 youth, 14 siblings)
- 6 families were required to discontinue (attendance)
- 5 families completed the 14-week program
- 34 people attended at least one program session

September 2020 – Program 9 (COVID restrictions in place)

- 12 families were accepted (12 caregivers, 12 youth)
- 6 families were required to discontinue (attendance)
- 6 families completed the 14-week program
- 18 people attended at least one program session

Booster sessions are held for graduating families at 6 months and one year after the completion of the 14-week program. Four booster sessions were held during 2020. The retention rate at the time of the boosters is significant as it demonstrated the importance of remaining connected with the families from the initial contact to the end of the program. Booster sessions that took place in 2020 were as follows:

March 2020 - Program 5 - Booster 2

- 4 families graduated from the program
- 1 family attended the second booster
- 1 family moved out of the service area
- Contact has been maintained with the other graduating families
- 75% retention rate one year after completion of the 14-week program

October 2020 - Program 6 - Booster 2

- 6 families graduated from the program
- 5 families attended the second booster
- 83% retention rate one year after completion of the 14-week program

November 2020 - Program 7 - Booster 1

- 7 families graduated from the program
- 3 families attended the booster
- 2 families were reluctant to attend due to COVID
- Contact has been maintained with the other graduating families
- 71% retention rate 6 months after the completion of the 14-week program

November 2020 – Program 8 – Graduation and Booster 1 (graduation was postponed because of COVID)

- 5 families graduated from the program
- 5 families attended the booster

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- 100% retention six months after COVID restrictions affected

Since the inception of the program, 269 referrals have been received. In 2020, 41 referrals were received. Since inception, the majority of referrals were received from the following agencies:

- Ministry of Social Services 68 referrals
- Parent/caregiver 42 referrals
- Saskatoon Public Schools 37 referrals
- Saskatoon Health Region 34 referrals
- Saskatoon Police Service 32 referrals
- Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools 26 referrals
- Miscellaneous Agencies (psychologist/private counsellors, Infinity House, NIWA) – 30 referrals

Based on the above information, the Coordinators noted a significant increase in referrals made by parents/caregivers. Typically, these referrals are based on information from past caregivers that have participated in the program and have shared the information with family and friends. This speaks as a strong endorsement for this program.

In 2020, the Strengthening Families team completed nine presentations. In total, since the start of the program, 35 public presentations have been made to 650 people at various community agencies and schools.

Strengthening Families Current Initiatives and Challenges:

Due to COVID-19, the Strengthening Families program was not operational between March and June of 2020. This resulted in only two programs being offered. In addition, because of COVID restrictions, changes to the program included: only the teen and caregiver in attendance, no childcare provided, and the parent/caregiver support group was not offered. With the reduction in who was able to attend (ie. not the entire family), this presented challenges for parents that were unable to find childcare and/or wanted the entire family to benefit from the program. This reduced the amount of people willing to consider the program. The program was still offered at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL). This facility provided a large enough area to be able to properly social distance while maintaining a high level of cleanliness.

Also, the program supports youth engaged in pro-social activities. For youth who are interested, Constable Lambe completes an application to KidsSport or Creative Kids to have the cost of registration paid by the participating agency. Twelve applications have been made for Taekwon-Do, martial arts, basketball and piano lessons. All of the applications made from this program were granted.

The Strengthening Families program is funded by the Federal Government (National Crime Prevention Centre) until October 2021. Currently, there are no other funding sources after this date. The cost of the program for the 2020 fiscal year was \$268,990.96. SPS agreed to fund the program until the end of 2021.

Crime Free Multihousing (CFMH)

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is a crime prevention program designed to reduce crime, drugs, and gang activity on multi-housing (apartment) properties and was created in the US in July of 1992. SPS has had this program in operation for over 20 years. The program assists residents, owners and managers of rental property in preventing crime at their rental property. There are three phases to the program:

Phase One: Training Seminar

- One-day workshop teaches the concepts of creating crime free buildings.
- Introduction to the Saskatoon Fire Department, Office of Residential Tenancies (ORT) and Sask Landlords Association (SKLA) rules and policies.

Phase Two: Security Audit

- The program requires the rental property to meet 9 mandatory security requirements including proper lock, lighting and landscaping.

Phase Three: Resident Safety Social

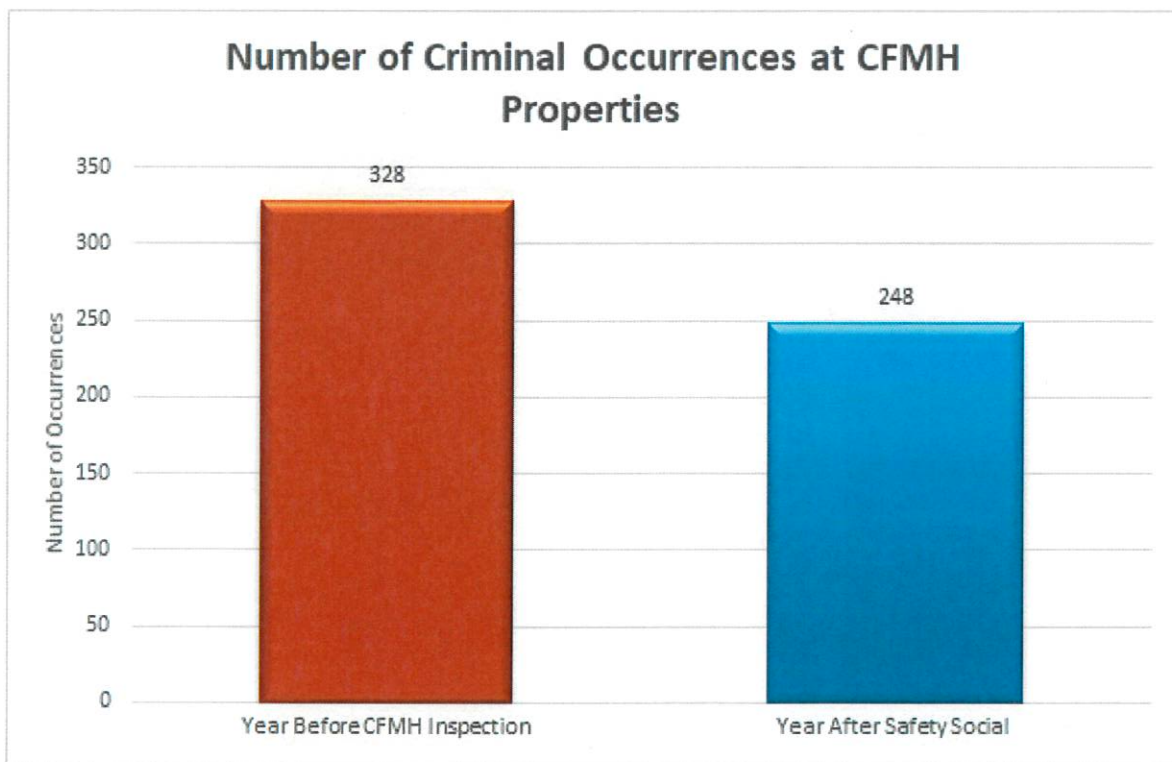
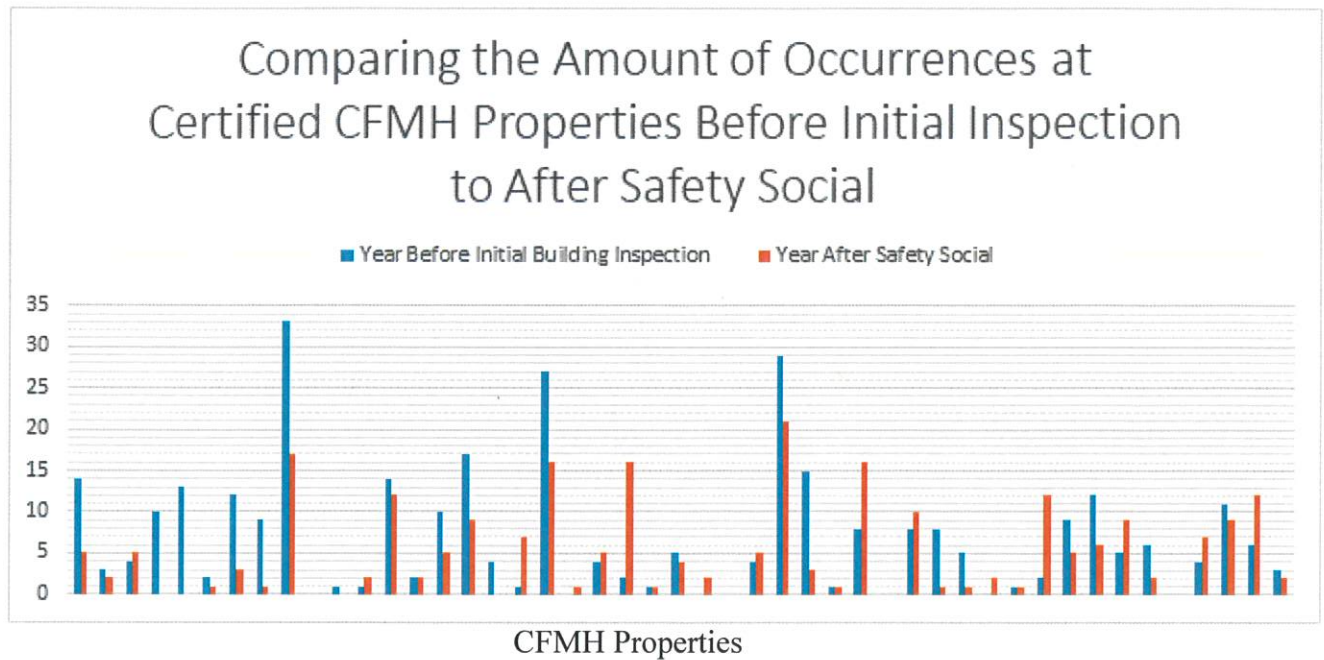
- The property owner/manager will organize a Resident Safety Social.
- The Saskatoon Police Service will introduce and explain the concept of the program and discuss safety tips.
- The rental property can post Crime Free Multi-Housing signs.

CFMH Staffing:

In 2020, CFMH added a second full-time position in March, and now has two full-time employees – a Coordinator and an Assistant Coordinator.

CFMH Statistics:

- CFMH held one Phase 1 training in October with 18 trainees representing 36 properties, and 1412 rental units;
- 20 inspections were carried out covering 58 buildings and 1833 rental units. 8 properties passed the Phase 2 inspection;
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, safety socials could not be held, so buildings that passed the security audit and signed CFMH membership documents were considered fully certified and able to enjoy the privileges of certified properties until restrictions on gatherings have been lifted and we can safely hold safety socials again;
- In 2020, CFMH had 113 properties actively engaged in the CFMH Program that were either in Phase 2 or 3.



These charts represent properties that were certified prior to December 31, 2019. Overall, the charts display a 24% decrease in the number of occurrences in the CFMH properties from prior to being in the program until completion. On some occasions, the occurrence number was higher at some properties but this was attributed to property managers/landlords being more aware of situations where Police should be contacted and that each building had fluctuations in tenants/criminal activity.

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CFMH Current Initiatives and Challenges:

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused challenges to CFMH. During the periods that limited CFMH's ability to carry out some daily operations, a thorough analysis was carried out to review the status of properties and inspections and preparations were made to perform online training and renewal seminars. This work will allow the CFMH team to ramp up operations through 2021.

An initiative that was started in 2020 involved analyzing reported mailbox thefts in multi-unit housing to identify building that could benefit from the CFMH program. The owners'/property managers of these buildings were contacted and offered information about the program. This will continue in 2021.

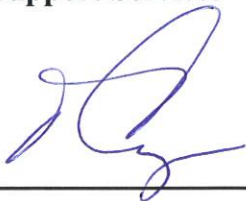
CONCLUSION:

The Vulnerable Persons Unit allows the Service to respond in a coordinated effort (with all services under one umbrella) to address complex, elevated risk situations. The unit works with community organizations to mitigate these risks in an attempt to reduce crime and increase safety in Saskatoon.

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Submitted by: 

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Dated: _____ April 1, 2021