



SASKATOON _____
POLICE SERVICE

TO: Jo Custead, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Troy Cooper
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2022 June 01

SUBJECT: Vulnerable Persons Unit
2021 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. The Vulnerable Persons Unit was established in 2019.

RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

Crime and Safety Strategy 2.1 continue to address acutely elevated risk situations that individuals, families, or environments face in the community.

Reduce acutely elevated-risk situation that individuals and/or families face in the community by assessing in a non-traditional Police approach.

DISCUSSION:

The Vulnerable Persons Unit was established in 2019 to coordinate established, non-traditional units within the SPS that provide a collaborative approach in responding to elevated risk situations in the community. The Unit consists of PACT, HUB, Strengthening Families and Crime Free Multi-housing. By having these units under the same umbrella, information and harm reductions strategies can 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 - Saskatoon Police Service, 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 calls that are mental health related (e.g. attempted suicide, self-harm, welfare check, suspected mentally ill, etc.) and/or addiction related. They are designed to be reactive and respond to calls that are in progress – thus being timely and of great assistance to Patrol in their call response. They are also responsible for the apprehension of individuals with a Mental Health Warrant.

PACT Staffing:

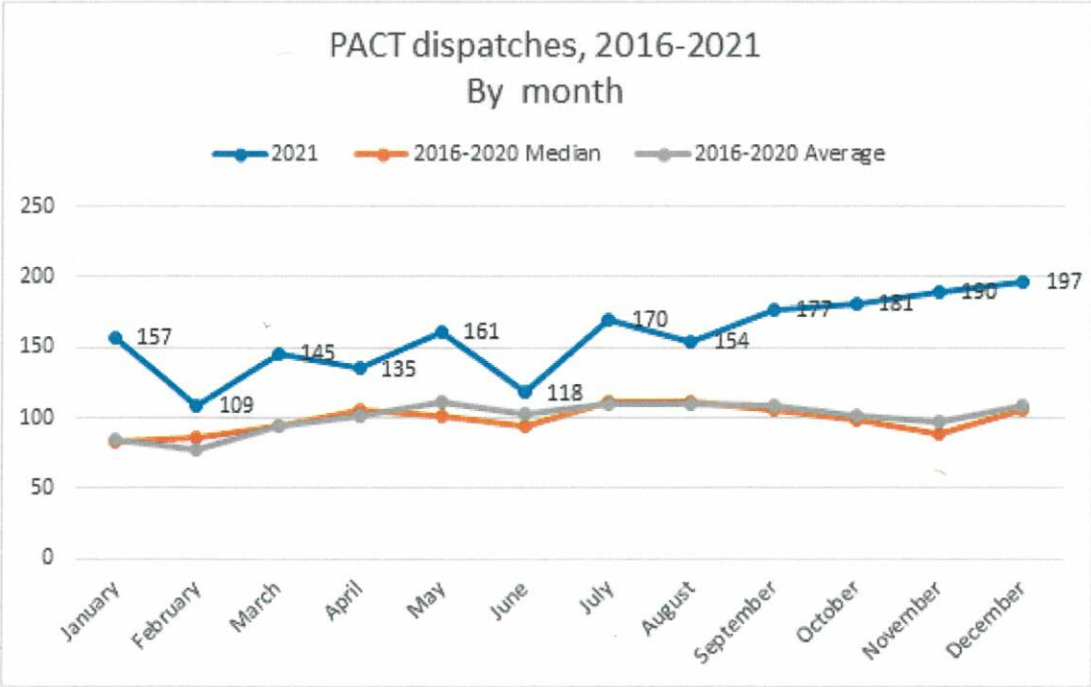
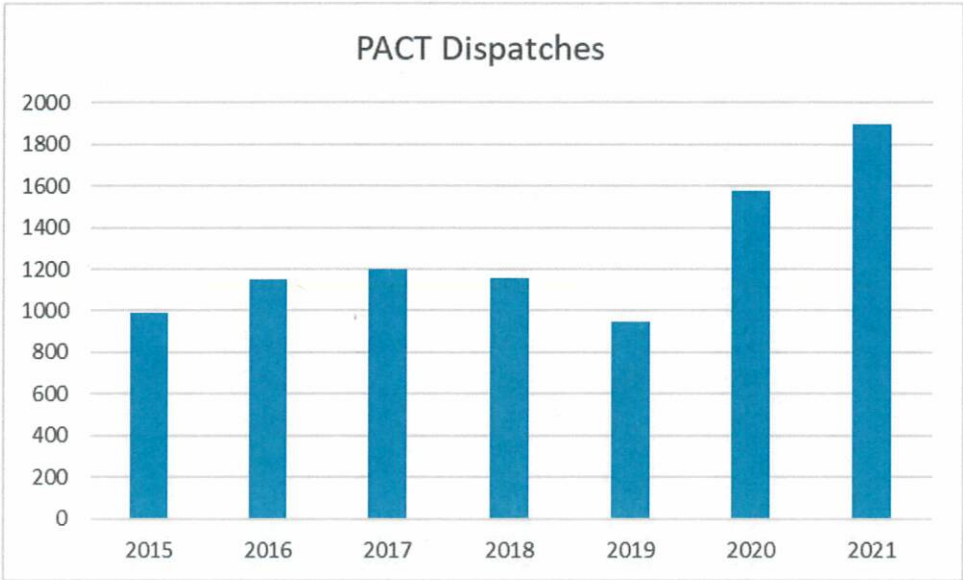
PACT is a specialized team made up of an SPS officer and a mental health social worker from the Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service. Two of the three PACT units have the SPS officer's positions provincially funded and social worker's positions funded by Saskatchewan Health Authority. The third PACT unit began in October of 2021 and both positions are fully funded by SPS.

The three PACT units each work a four-day rotation of two-day shifts (0700-1700) and two evening shifts (1400-0200). With Patrol having four platoons, the PACT schedule allows for three of the four patrol shifts to have PACT unit coverage.

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PACT Statistics:

In 2021, PACT dealt with 1894 dispatched calls. This was an increase of 20% from 2020. Call volume has increased every month from 2020, with noticeable increases towards the end of 2021.



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

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(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
2021	353	54	407
Total	1399	207	1606

As you can see from the chart emergency room diversions have increased 27% from 2020, almost three times the number of diversions since PACT began in 2015. This is a similar trend in the number of diversions from arrest, thus reducing the number held in SPS Detention and the number entering the criminal justice system. Below are the associated services and unit cost as provided by the Ministries of Health, Social Services, Justice and Medavie Services (2019):

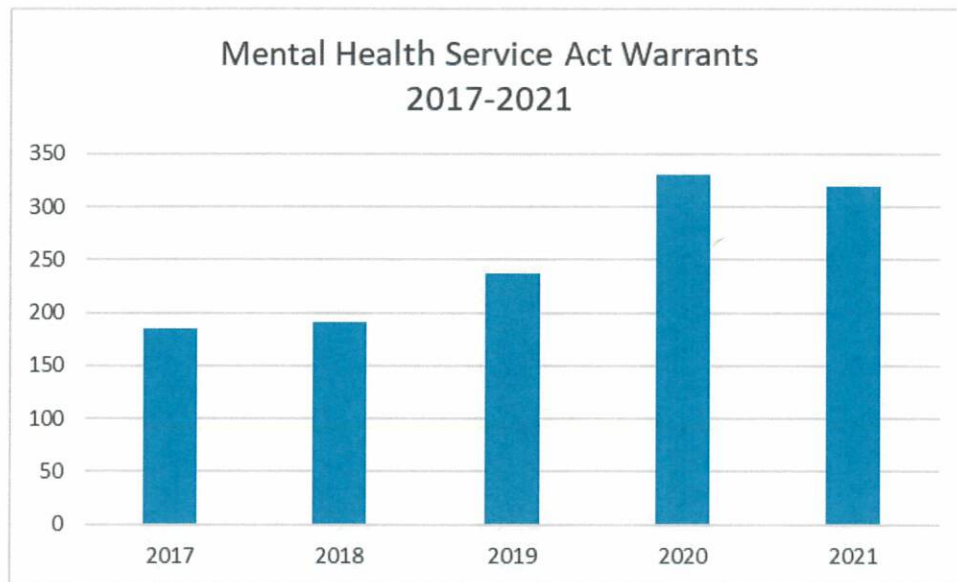
- Emergency Room Visit (\$800)
- Ambulance Trip (\$325)
- Ambulance Assessment (\$325)
- Acute Psychiatric Hospitalization Day (\$1000)
- Medical Hospitalization Day (\$550)
- Brief Detox Day/Night (\$210)
- Social Detox Day (\$210)
- Contact with Police (\$100)
- Police Detention Day/Night for Intoxication (\$450)
- Incarceration Day – non –related to intoxication, SPS data only (\$135)
- Taxi Ride – Ministry of Social Services (\$25)

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 Saskatchewan Mental Health Services Act. For the 2021 reporting period, 320 mental health warrants were completed.

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When reviewing mental health warrants over a five-year period, a noticeable increase is observed between 2017 and 2021 – 185 vs. 320.



PACT Current Initiatives & Challenges:

Currently, each platoon has a PACT unit on three of their four shifts. 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.

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 Table works in an outreach capacity with other agencies to identify individuals or families that are facing elevated risks that can't be solved by a singular agency. 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 mornings to present and problem solve individuals and families that are in an elevated risk situation.

HUB was operational in 2021, however, certain challenges existed due to COVID-19 restrictions. To correspond with agency restrictions/guidelines, a virtual meeting format (WebEx) for those who were not able to attend in person was continued and adjustments were made to accommodate door knocks.

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The agencies that participated at the HUB Table in 2021 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)
- Saskatchewan Housing Authority (SHA)
- Saskatoon Tribal Council

The HUB model is a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach with an emphasis on integrating human service, sharing data, and measuring success along the way. An evaluation of the Saskatoon HUB was commissioned by CSWB in which a written report will be available in the latter part of 2022.

HUB Staffing:

SPS has a dedicated, full time constable assigned to the HUB which is provincially funded. This is the only full time, dedicated person as the other agencies provide delegates to assist while maintaining their main position. The HUB constable was appointed as the chairperson for the HUB table in 2017 and continues to maintain this position. This role requires scheduling and meeting with individuals/families to assess and offer assistance (door knocks), coordination of administrative tasks, 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 the data entry for Saskatoon discussions and creating reports to identify trends related to specific risk factors. Working in the communities with people in elevated risk situations often identifies systemic issues within our community and by working with a wide range of organizations and community groups, we are able to develop strategies to address these issues that will allow for changes to ensure a safe and secure environment.

HUB Statistics:

HUB had 132 discussions presented in the 2021 year. SPS played a primary role at the HUB table by being the lead agency with 33 referrals and participating in 124 (93.9%) of the 132 discussions.

Breakdown of Agency Referrals

January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021

Agency	# of Discussions (Originated Agency)	Discussion Assisting Agency	% of Involvement in 132 Discussions
Saskatoon Police Service	33	95	93.9%
SHA – Mental Health and Addiction	23	59	67.4%
MSS – Income Assistance	5	42	35.6%
Saskatoon Public Schools	26	19	34.1%
MSS – Child and Family	17	24	32.6%
Saskatchewan Housing Authority	6	17	18.2%
Community Corrections	7	13	15.9%
Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools	9	11	15.2%

***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 2021, 59 (44.27%) of the discussions were identified as individuals and 73 (55.73%) were identified as families. Contact (door knocks) with the family or individuals was made 225 times with Cst. Robson, the SPS Hub Chairperson, attending 171 of the door knocks.

Demographics Breakdown by Type, Age Group and Sex

January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021

Type	Discussions	Percentage
Family	73	55.73%
Person	59	44.27%
Total	132	100.00%

Age Group	Discussions	Percentage
12-17 Years	8	13.79%
18-24 Years	23	39.66%
25-29 Years	6	10.34%
30-39 Years	5	8.62%
40-59 Years	6	10.34%
60+ Years	4	6.90%

Sex	Discussions	Percentage
Female	31	53.45%
Male	26	44.83%
Unassigned	1	1.72%
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 HUB to accurately identify the focus of the risk variable. In 2021, 651 risk factors were identified in the 132 Discussions. Of these risk factors, the highest risk variables identified were: mental health, criminal involvement, and basic needs not being met and housing.

January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021

Risk Variables	Number of Risk Factors	Percentage
Mental Health	115	17.67%
Drugs	58	8.91%
Housing	51	7.83%
Criminal Involvement	47	7.22%
Antisocial/Negative Behaviour	40	6.14%
Alcohol	36	5.53%
Basic Needs	35	5.38%
Missing School	30	4.61%
Parenting	25	3.84%
Physical Health	25	3.84%
Cognitive Functioning	22	3.38%
Physical Violence	21	3.23%
Poverty	21	3.23%
Crime Victimization	19	2.92%
Suicide	15	2.30%
Emotional Violence	14	2.15%
Missing/Runaway	13	2.00%
Negative Peers	12	1.84%
Self-Harm	10	1.54%
Gangs	9	1.38%
Supervision	9	1.38%
Sexual Violence	4	1.23%
Social Environment	8	0.78%
Unemployment	6	0.92%
Threat to Public Health and Safety	2	0.31%
Total	651	100%

TOP Risk Factors from 2018-2021

Year	Top 1	Top 2	Top 3
2018	Mental Health	Drugs	Criminal Involvement
2019	Mental Health	Drugs	Criminal Involvement
2020	Mental Health	Criminal Involvement	Basic Needs (person unable to meet their own basic needs)
2021	Mental Health	Drugs	Housing

Over the last four years, mental health continues to be the number one risk factor, with drugs, criminal involvement, basic needs and housing following closely. Housing (or homelessness) became a major risk factor that was identified during COVID that HUB feels will continue to be one of the top risk factors in years to come.

HUB Current Initiatives & Challenges:

One of the challenges faced by the HUB table was related to the barriers presented by COVID restrictions. All participants preferred in person meetings but adhered to their agencies policies and protocols. During COVID, over half of our table continued to attend meetings in person. Amazing work was accomplished despite the logistical issues presented. All participants have now returned to in person meetings.

Another challenge faced by the HUB table is that representatives from other agencies are not dedicated to HUB. This means they are balancing a current workload and HUB files. Prioritizing HUB files becomes difficult when scheduling follow-up and support while also trying to balance their current workload

Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families Saskatoon was a family skills-based training program for high-risk teens and their families, which concluded in December 2021. SPS no longer offers this program. The five-year project strived to improve parenting, communication and social skills within the family unit.

Strengthening Families began when the SPS established a prevention initiative for children, youth and families who were at risk of criminality and gang activity. A committee 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 was in place until October 2021, with SPS bridging the program 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 (one evening per week) evidence-based parenting

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skills, social skills and family training program designed for high-risk families. Trained facilitators 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 was designed to reduce barriers and provide benefits to the families attending. These included providing:

- Transportation to the session;
- Childcare during the sessions;
- Incentives for participation during the sessions in a “family game atmosphere” (included 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 were made by anyone or any agency and were submitted online in a very simplified format. Factors considered when making a referral to this program included:

- 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.

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

Three programs were offered a year – January, April and September and the programs operated out of the White Buffalo Youth Lodge.

Strengthening Families Staffing:

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

Strengthening Families Statistics:

Since September 2017, the start of the first Strengthening Families Saskatoon program, 376 family members have attended at least one program session and 63 families have graduated from the program.

Three 14-week programs were completed during the 2021 calendar year. Although the number of families that graduated from each program appears low, this is on par, if not greater than similar high-risk programs across Canada.

January 2021 - Program 10 (**COVID restrictions in place)

- 10 families were accepted (10 caregivers, 10 youth)
- 5 families were required to discontinue (attendance)
- 5 families completed the 14-week program
- 16 people attended at least one program session

April, 2021 – Program 11 (**COVID restrictions in place)

- 9 families were accepted (11 caregivers, 9 youth)
- 5 families were required to discontinue (attendance)
- 4 families completed the 14-week program
- 16 people attended at least one program session

September, 2021 – Program 12 (**COVID restrictions in place)

- 11 families were accepted (11 caregivers, 11 youth)
- 7 families were required to discontinue (attendance)
- 4 families completed the 14-week program
- 20 people attended at least one program session

(COVID restrictions limited the attendance at the sessions to the youth and caregiver(s) only. No other family members were allowed to attend.)

Booster sessions were held for graduating families at six months and one year after the completion of the 14-week program. Six booster sessions were held during 2021. 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. The following booster sessions took place in 2021:

May 2021 - Program 7 - Booster 2

- 7 families graduated from the program
- 6 family attended the second booster
- 1 family did not attend because of COVID concerns
- 100% retention rate one year after completion of the 14-week program

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May 2021 - Program 8 - Booster 2

- 5 families graduated from the program
- 5 families attended the second booster
- 100% retention rate one year after completion of the 14-week program

June 2021 - Program 9 - Booster 1

- 6 families graduated from the program
- 4 families attended the booster
- 1 family moved out of the service area
- 1 family was reluctant to attend due to COVID
- 83% retention six month after the program

September 2021 - Program 10 - Booster 1

- 4 families graduated from the program
- 3 families attended the booster
- 1 family was reluctant to attend due to COVID
- 75% retention six month after the program

November 2021 - Program 9 - Booster 2

- 6 families graduated from the program
- 2 families attended the booster
- 2 families were reluctant to attend due to COVID
- 2 families moved out of the service area
- 50% retention one year after the program

November 2021 - Program 11 - Booster 1

- 4 families graduated from the program
- 3 families attended the booster
- 1 family had a medical emergency and could not attend
- 100% retention six month after the program

Since the inception of the program, 281 referrals were received. In 2021, 19 referrals were received. Referrals were from the following agencies:

- Ministry of Social Services 71 referrals
- Parent/caregiver 45 referrals
- Saskatoon Public Schools 40 referrals
- Saskatoon Health Region 36 referrals
- Saskatoon Police Service 34 referrals
- Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools 27 referrals
- Miscellaneous Agencies (psychologist/private counsellors, Infinity House, NIWA) – 28 referrals

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In total, since the start of the program, 38 public presentations have been made to 673 people at various community agencies and schools.

Strengthening Families Current Initiatives and Challenges:

Due to COVID, the Strengthening Families program was adjusted. Changes included, only the teen and caregiver could attend, 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 who were unable to find childcare and/or wanted the entire family to benefit from the program. This reduced the amount of people willing to participate in the program. The program continued at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL). This facility provided a large enough area to social distance while maintaining a high level of cleanliness.

The Federal Government, National Crime Prevention Centre, funded the Strengthening Families program until October 2021. The Saskatoon Police Service provided funding to the end of the fiscal year December 31, 2021. The National Crime Prevention Centre provided \$1.7 million in funding for the program to run September 8, 2016 to October 31, 2021.

Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH)

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is a crime prevention program designed to reduce crime, drugs, and gang activity in multi-housing (apartment) properties and was created in the US in 1992. SPS has had this program in operation for over 20 years. The program assists residents, owners and managers of rental properties. 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 nine mandatory security requirements including proper lock, lighting and landscaping.

Phase Three: Community Event

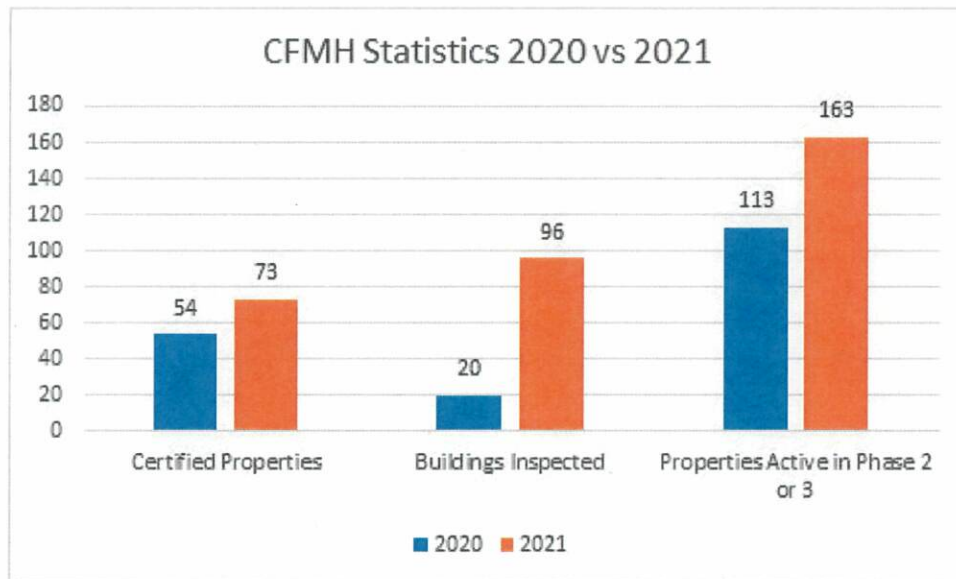
- The property owner/manager will organize a Community Event.
- The Saskatoon Police Service will introduce and explain the concept of the program and discuss safety tips, encouraging residents to ask questions and get to know each other.
- The rental property can post Crime Free Multi-Housing signs.

CFMH Staffing:

CFMH functions effectively with two full-time employees – a Coordinator and an Assistant Coordinator.

CFMH Statistics:

- CFMH held four Phase 1 trainings, which had 70 property managers (from 30 different companies) in attendance.
- Three training seminars on crime and rental buildings were offered with 93 people in attendance. Topics covered Mental Health & Housing, De-escalation and Verbal Crisis Intervention and Mailbox Theft Prevention.
- 70 inspections were carried out in 2021, which represents a 250% increase from 2020.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, safety socials were postponed, 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 were lifted and safety socials could continue.
- In 2021, CFMH had 163 properties actively engaged in the CFMH Program that were either in Phase 2 or 3.



Current Initiatives and Challenges:

- For most of 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to prevent CFMH from implementing some aspects of its program, however, most training opportunities continued online. CFMH used Zoom to hold live events, and a program called Canvas Instructure was used to develop online courses such as the Phase 1 Building Safety Training where registrants can access the material on their own schedule, completing the course at their own pace.
- The CFMH employees took training from the Crime Free Association which allowed them to expand the program to include Condominiums and Trailer Parks – whose management boards/staff meet certain requirements.
- Updated, edited, rewrote and designed the 92-page CFMH Phase 1 training manual.

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- Implemented the use of new technology, (Mail chimp, Eventbrite, Canvas Instructure), to improve electronic communication, training registration and payment, and interactive online training.
- Strengthened/renewed relationships with Saskatchewan Housing Authority, Lighthouse Assisted Living, Saskatchewan Landlord Association, Saskatoon Housing Coalition, Mainstreet Equity and Avenue Living Inc.
- In partnership with an SPS Central Community Liaison Officer, CFMH designed and distributed *No Loitering* signage to deter loitering/trespassing activity.

CONCLUSION:

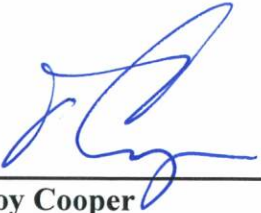
The Vulnerable Persons Unit allows the Service to respond in a coordinated effort (with all services under one umbrella) to address complex, elevated risk situations. The unit works with community organizations to mitigate these risks in an attempt to reduce crime and increase safety in Saskatoon.

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Submitted by:



Troy Cooper
Chief of Police

Dated:

June 3, 2022