



SASKATOON _____ **POLICE SERVICE**

TO: Jo Custead, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Troy Cooper
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2023 April 12

SUBJECT: Vulnerable Persons Unit 2022 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, and Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH). The Vulnerable Persons Unit was established in 2019 and is under the Community Engagement Division.

RECOMMENDATION:

That this report be received as information.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

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 in order to coordinate existing units within the Saskatoon Police Service. These units include the Police and Crisis Team (PACT), HUB, and Crime Free Multi-Housing. Common threads among these teams are early intervention and developmental crime prevention. This involves reducing community and individual risk factors and increasing protective factors with the overall goal of impacting crime and public safety. This is an integrated, multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral approach that involves shifting from traditional calls for service response to creating alternative solutions in keeping with problem-oriented policing.

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.

The PACT teams provide immediate police response to persons with mental illness (PMI) 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 units 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 currently 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.

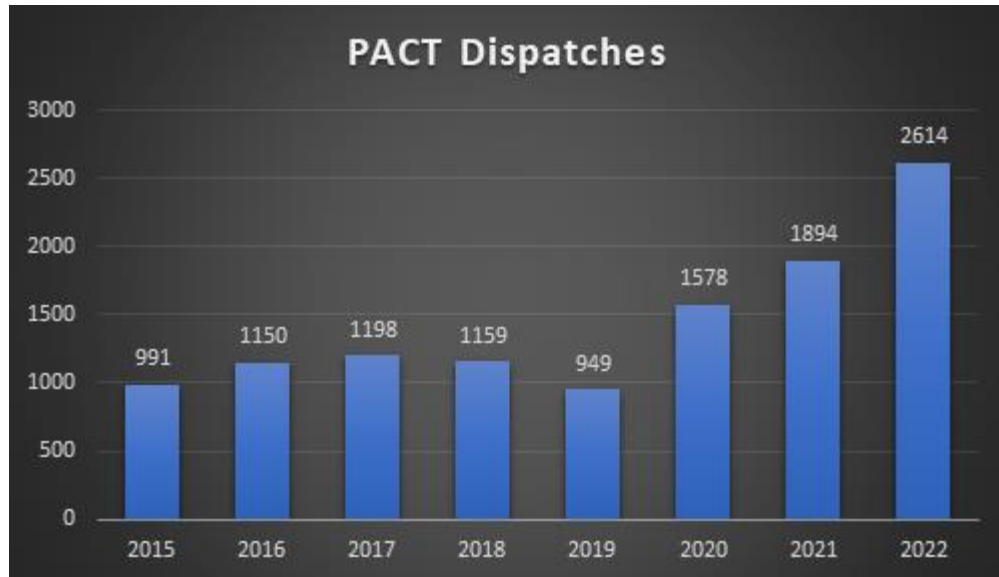
PACT Staffing:

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 PACT units each work a four-day rotation of two-day shifts (0700-1700) and two evening shifts (1400-0200). Based on an eight-day rotation, four days would have full PACT coverage (0700-0200 hours) with the other four having a PACT unit working either a day shift or evening shift.

PACT Statistics:

In 2022, PACT dealt with 2614 dispatched calls. This was an increase of 38% from 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 (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
2022	445	68	513
Total	1844	275	2119

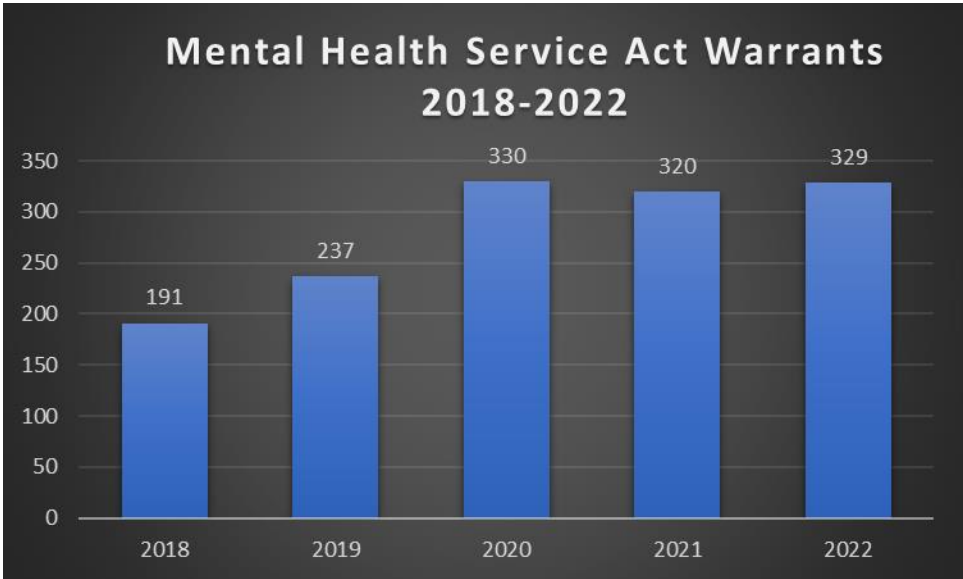
As seen above, PACT has continued to increase the number of PMI diverted from emergency departments year after year. From 2021 to 2022 our teams have increased the number of diversions by 26%. This directly translates to significant cost saving to Saskatoon Health Authority in addition to relieving the pressure on frontline health care staff.

PACT also continues to have a positive impact on diverting people from being arrested, detained, or incarcerated. These diversions prevent the criminalization of mental illness and contribute to destigmatizing mental health in our community. Last year saw an all-time high with 68 PMI diverted from arrest. Aside from being responsive to calls for alternative mental health crisis response infrastructures, there are significant subsequent impacts on service delivery costs.

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)
- Taxi Ride – Ministry of Social Services (\$25)

One of the interactions PACT has with people experiencing mental health issues are apprehensions related to Mental Health Warrants. For the 2022 reporting period, 329 Mental Health Warrants were processed by SPS. While this number remains consistent with the previous year, a noticeable increase is observed from 2018.



PACT Current Initiatives & Challenges:

As outlined earlier in this report, we currently operate with three PACT teams which does not provide for full platoon coverages. Adding a fourth team would afford for such coverage, and noteworthy is the fact that all PACT members are replaced when away from their duties by trained cover-off personnel. In the absence of a fourth team, mental health related calls are dispatched to general patrol officers. Due to pressures on patrol resources, and in the absence of Crisis Worker partners, specialized training and expertise, we do not experience the same diversionary outcomes in comparison to when PACT is utilized. Additional challenges for PACT include the dramatic increased demand for response to mental health related calls for service. Since 2015 the dispatched calls for service to PACT have increased by over 163%, the most significant uptick has been seen since 2019.

Saskatoon HUB

Under the umbrella of the Community Safety & Wellbeing (CSWB) portfolio and the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, 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 single 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. The HUB Committee meets every Tuesday and Thursday mornings to present and problem solve individuals and families that are in an elevated risk situation.

The agencies that participated at the HUB Table in 2022 include:

- Saskatoon Police Service
- Ministry of Social Services – Child and Family Services
- Saskatoon Health Authority – Mental Health and Addiction (one representative handles both adult and youth)
- Community Corrections
- Ministry of Social Services – Income Assistance
- Saskatoon Public Schools
- Greater Saskatoon 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.

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 and families to assess and offer assistance (in person contacts), 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 of the data entry for Saskatoon discussions and creating of 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 148 discussions presented in the 2022 year and completed 292 in person contacts in the community to meet with and hear the voices of the clients. SPS played a primary role at the HUB table by being the lead agency with 25 referrals and participating in 115 (93.3%) of the 148 discussions.

Breakdown of Agency Referrals

January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Agency	# of Discussions (Originated Agency)	Discussion Assisting Agency	% of Involvement in 132 Discussions
Saskatoon Police Service	25	115	93.3%
Saskatoon Public School	46	21	45.0%
SHA Mental Health & Addictions	10	52	40.9%
MSS – Income Assistance	11	48	39.6%
MSS – Child and Family Programs	23	33	37.6%

***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 2022, 35 (23.7%) of the discussions were identified as individuals and 113 (76.3%) were identified as families. Of the 292 in person contacts completed with the family or individuals, Cst. Robson, the SPS Hub Chairperson, attending 215 of these personal contacts. The number of contacts increased by 30% from 2021.

Demographics Breakdown by Type, Age Group and Sex

January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Type	Discussions	Percentage
Family	113	76.35%
Person	35	44.27%
Total	148	100.00%

Age Group	Discussions	Percentage
12-17 Years	1	2.86%
18-24 Years	13	37.14%
25-29 Years	2	5.71%
30-39 Years	10	28.57%
40-59 Years	0	0%
60+ Years	1	2.86%

Sex	Discussions	Percentage
Female	19	54.29%
Male	16	45.71%
Unassigned	0	0%
Total	35	100.00%

Risk Variables for Saskatoon Discussions

When discussions are brought forward, they are identified 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 2022, 738 risk factors were identified in the 148 Discussions. Of these risk factors, the highest risk variables identified were: mental health, housing, and drugs.

January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Risk Variables	Number of Risk Factors	Percentage
Mental Health	115	15.58%
Housing	77	10.43%
Drugs	56	7.59%
Basic Needs	51	6.91%
Missing School	48	6.50%
Parenting	39	5.28%
Poverty	38	5.15%

Physical Health	34	4.61%
Criminal Involvement	33	4.47%
Physical Violence	32	4.34%
Alcohol	30	4.07%
Antisocial/Negative Behavior	30	4.07%
Cognitive Functioning	27	3.66%
Missing Runaway	18	2.44%
Suicide	18	2.44%
Crime Victimization	17	2.30%
Emotional Violence	13	1.76%
Gangs	13	1.76%
Unemployment	12	1.63%
Negative Peers	11	1.49%
Self-Harm	9	1.22%
Sexual Environment	7	0.95%
Supervision	4	0.54%
Sexual Violence	4	0.54%
Threat to Public Health and Safety	2	0.27%
Total	738	100%

Top Risk Factors from 2018-2022

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
2022	Mental Health	Housing	Drugs

Mental health continues to be the number one risk factor, with housing and drugs switching places from 2021. Housing (or homelessness) became a major risk factor that was identified during COVID that HUB feels will continue to be a major risk factor in the coming years.

HUB Current Initiatives & Challenges:

A challenge which is becoming glaringly obvious is the growing need for more involvement from the members at the HUB table. The files have become increasingly complex (family units are larger with more elevated risks) and more time per discussion for outreach are required in order to make meaningful connections in order that the risk be decreased. Our SPS representative is the only full time, dedicated HUB member while others at the table are

attempting to balance a current work load and HUB files. Prioritizing HUB files becomes difficult when trying to schedule follow up contacts/meetings and supporting clients while also trying to balance their current jobs.

Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH)

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is a long-running SPS crime prevention program that works to reduce crime in multi-family apartment and condominium properties. SPS statistics suggest that CFMH certified properties have, on average, a 25% reduction in criminal incidents.

CFMH assists residents, owners and property managers in three key ways:

Phase One: Trainings

- The first, required training is a 6.5-hour-long Phase 1 Building Security training. This teaches how to secure buildings, maintain fire safety, and work with SPS and CFMH. Participants learn tips for effectively engaging with the Office of Residential Tenancies, Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods, the Saskatchewan Landlord Association (SKLA), and community partners.
- Throughout the year, low-cost (or free) CFMH trainings are also offered.
- 419 residents from 40 different rental companies participated in CFMH trainings in 2022.
- In 2022, CFMH offered: a de-escalation training focused on workplace safety, led by a SPS Crisis Negotiator; a lunch and learn session with the Saskatoon Sheriff; an online training on ‘What to do when uninvited visitors are staying in the building; and a training designed specifically for building maintenance staff.

Phase Two: Daytime and Nighttime Security Audits

- CFMH staff inspect for 9 mandatory security requirements including proper locks, lighting and maintenance. They work with a great diversity of buildings.
- In 2022 CFMH’s two staff members inspected 94 buildings.
- Property managers and buildings owners receive a comprehensive inspection report, and they are encouraged to fix any security deficiencies. Low-cost solutions are suggested.

Phase Three: CFMH Community Event with Tenants

- This community social and educational event with, and for, tenants is hosted by the property owner/manager, CFMH staff and SPS Community Liaison Officers.
- Tenants enjoy food, prizes, social connection, and the opportunity to discuss safety and crime concerns.
- CFMH participated in 22 events, engaging several hundred tenants, in 2022.

A property becomes CFMH certified when the building and staff have completed all three phases. 22 buildings were newly CFMH certified in 2022.

CFMH Staffing:

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

Community Liaison Officers (CLO) assist with inspections, community events with tenants and trainings. CFMH particularly appreciated CLOs sharing their expertise when we presented to an audience of 150 people at the Saskatchewan Landlord Association conference. CFMH finds it helpful to be connected to officers within the Community Engagement Unit and throughout the Service.

CFMH Statistics:



Current Initiatives and Challenges:

CFMH has become a reliable, sought-after information resource for the Saskatoon rental industry. Almost every day CFMH receives calls from property managers, building owners and/or tenants who are seeking advice and support regarding criminal matters they have experienced, or would like to avoid experiencing. Property managers appreciate receiving our incident reports, as the reports offer insight into what is happening in their buildings 24/hours/day and 7 days per week.

According to participants' evaluations, CFMH trainings are relevant, helpful and informative. We always seek to improve and innovate to meet current needs within the rental industry. For example, in 2023 we are offering a special training for condo owners who rent their suites, a training to help property managers deal with death, drugs and disastrous messes, and information about de-escalating conflict and, the Sheriff's services. We partner with ten community agencies and other SPS units to facilitate training.

In 2022 CFMH launched a pilot project to assist a formerly CFMH certified building that changed ownership and saw a significant increase in crime, gang activity, and vandalism. CFMH made a minimal investment to enhance the security of entrance doors, increased communication with the building owner, property managers and tenants, and is closely monitoring incidents of crime and vandalism. Not enough time has lapsed to provide definitive statistical analysis, however, the building owner and CFMH have noted a recent decrease in criminal activity since the start of the pilot project.

As we inspect buildings across the city we note that Saskatoon Fire, Medavie, Sasktel, Canada Post, and Saskatchewan Health Authority all have lock boxes at the entrances of apartment and condo doors. We also note more multi-family buildings installing interlocking metal astragals which make it harder for anyone, including Police responding to emergencies, to gain access. CFMH would like to assist SPS by developing a pilot project to have SPS lock boxes installed which would use a push button code to access a key. The number for this code would be determined, but would be easy for all patrol officers to remember. CFMH would ensure the lock boxes were of the highest quality, and installed following strict guidelines for maximum security.

One quarter (24%) of the calls we share, (i.e., 2,241 Suspicious Persons calls in 2022), are related to homelessness. People are regularly breaking in or forcing entry so they can sleep in apartment/condo common areas. Those who inhabit stairwells and lobbies are vulnerable to assault, theft, overdose death and, they can pose a significant challenge to tenants, building owners, property managers and maintenance staff. CFMH is well aware of the demand that homelessness is continuing to have on police resources and staff, to those in the rental industry, and of course, to the individuals and families who cannot afford permanent housing.

CONCLUSION:

The Vulnerable Persons Unit allows the Service to proactively work in a coordinated effort to address complex, elevated risk situations. The integrated teams work toward reducing community and individual risk factors and increasing protective factors with the overall goal of impacting crime and public safety.

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