



SASKATOON _____
POLICE SERVICE

TO: Shirley Greyeyes, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Dave Haye
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2024 March 28

SUBJECT: Vulnerable Persons Unit 2023 Annual Report

FILE NO.: 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 (VPU) 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 VPU was established in 2019 in order to coordinate existing units within the SPS. These units include PACT, HUB, and CFMH. 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 - SPS, 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 in a trauma informed practice while sharing valuable resources and information with one another.

Outcomes include:

- enhanced immediate response and service to persons experiencing mental health/addictions crisis;
- reduced 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 ;
- improved 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.

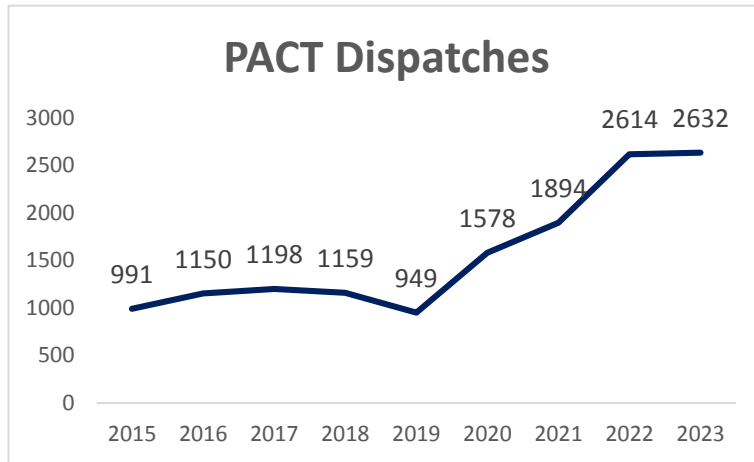
PACT units are dispatched to calls that are mental health related (e.g. attempted suicide, self-harm, welfare check, suspected mentally ill, etc.) and/or addiction related. They are designed to be reactive and respond to calls that are currently in progress – thus being timely and of great assistance to Patrol in their call response. They are also responsible for the apprehension of individuals with a Mental Health Warrant.

PACT Staffing

A fourth PACT unit was implemented in October of 2023, which now makes the unit comprised of four specialized teams with the partnerships being a SPS officer and a mental health social worker from the Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service. With the introduction of our fourth unit, all Platoons now have a dedicated PACT unit. Three of the four PACT units have the SPS officer's positions provincially funded and social worker's positions funded by Saskatchewan Health Authority. The SPS fully funds the fourth PACT positions (police officer and mental health social worker). Each PACT unit works a four-day rotation of two-day shifts (0700-1700) and two evening shifts (1400-0200).

PACT Statistics

In 2023, PACT was dispatched to 2632 calls. These calls have a mental health and/or addiction component and involve an emergent nature. PACT is a primary responder – meaning that they are on the street, responding to calls in an immediate response.



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 from:	#	Minimal Cost Per Visit (2019)	Minimum Cost Savings	Inflation Estimation	Cost Savings with Inflation
Emergency Department	452	\$800.00	\$ 361,600.00	918.96 ¹	\$415,369.92
Detention	43	\$450	\$ 19,350.00	516.91 ¹	22,227.13
Total			\$ 380,950.00		\$437,597.05

PACT continues to divert PMI from emergency departments. 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. Aside from being responsive to calls for

¹ Inflation calculated using Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator, which suggested annual rate of inflation from 2019 to 2023 was 3.53 for an overall percent change of 14.87. <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

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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 2023 reporting period, 291 Mental Health Warrants were processed by SPS. Other collaborations with our community partners are being used by our PACT units in order that clients are redirected from the emergency department to their community mental health nurses.

PACT apprehended 168 people under the Mental Health and Services Act (MHSA) in 2023. This represents greater than one third of all of the apprehensions within the entire SPS. PACT was responsible for transporting 111 people to RUH for a voluntary assessment compared with 307 transported by patrol.

Statistics tell a story but some of the intangibles that are associated to PACT include:

- PACT spends considerable time working on safety plans/diversions from hospital. This often requires “thinking outside the box” and taking the time to develop a plan with the client that will work for them. PACT often goes back and re-connects with the client just to make sure the safety plan is working and they’re safe.
- The partnership with Community Paramedicine (Medavie) is growing. The ability to work with others in the community, and be able to offer immediate solutions which allow people to be able to remain in their home is incredibly important.
- The collaboration with hospital is extremely important yet unique. The relationships that are developed with doctors, nurses and psychiatric liaison nurses help us to create an environment that fosters trust in our assessments which allow for the best outcomes for our clients. It has been recognized that the likelihood of a patient brought in by PACT will on most occasions result in certification to Dube.
- Looking through a trauma informed lens when working with involuntary clients is required by both the PACT officer and mental health worker, as this type of practice is at the heart of providing a good experience to those they serve.

- Developing positive relationships in the community – so much so that PACT is being requested by clients and their families. When responding, they attend in an unmarked vehicle, which reduces the stigma associated with Police.

PACT Current Initiatives & Challenges

With the demand for mental health increasing in Saskatoon, PACT makes every attempt possible to divert away from the hospital in situations that do not require this care. Hospital Emergency Departments (ED) continue to be overburdened and short on rooms which contribute to longer waiting times of our teams. If PACT is waiting with a subject in the ED, they are unable to actively respond to calls in progress. Initiatives are being pursued with Community Mental Health Nurses to look at ways that medications can be given in the community or client's homes instead of transporting to the ED.

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 2023 include:

- Saskatoon Police Service
- Ministry of Social Services – Child and Family Services
- Saskatoon Health Authority – Mental Health and Addiction (one representative for 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 (**January to September)

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. 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 151 discussions presented in the 2023 year and completed 255 in person contacts in the community to meet with and hear the voices of the clients. There were 70 in person HUB meetings.

Breakdown of Agency Referrals

January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023

Agency	# of Discussions (Originated Agency)
Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division	43
Saskatoon Public School	37
MSS – Child and Family Programs	24
Saskatoon Police Service	22
SHA – Mental Health and Addiction Services	10
MSS – Income Assistance	4
Saskatchewan Housing Authority	4
Saskatoon Tribal Council	3
Community Corrections	3
MSS – Community Living Service Delivery	1

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 2023, 782 risk factors were identified in the 151 Discussions. Of these risk factors, the highest risk variables identified were: mental health, housing, and drugs.

Risk Category	Number	% of Total
Mental Health	138	17.6%
House	69	8.8%
Drugs	58	7.4%
Basic Needs	54	6.9%
Missing School	48	6.1%
Criminal Involvement	44	5.6%
Physical Health	40	5.1%
Alcohol	32	4.1%
Antisocial/Negative Behavior	29	3.7%
Poverty	29	3.7%
Parenting	25	3.2%
Total	782	

Mental health continues to be the number one risk factor, with housing and drugs being the next most identified risk factors. This order is consistent with the risk factors identified in 2022. 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.

As with PACT, success is hard to quantify. Two success stories from 2023 have been included in Appendix A to show the work being accomplished by our HUB table.

HUB Current Initiatives & Challenges

The challenge continues to be 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. Mental Health and Addiction have provided a representative that is largely dedicated to HUB and both school systems representatives have provided increased involvement which has proven to be very helpful. Prioritizing HUB files becomes difficult when trying to schedule follow up contacts/meetings and supporting clients while also trying to balance their current workload.

Another glaring issue that has been identified by HUB is the lack of available housing. Many supports are able to be put in place for our clients but housing presents many challenges. With some clients, we are left with closing the discussion while they are still in hotels or shelters as we

have exhausted our efforts in housing applications. With the housing demands greater than the supply – particularly for large families, we are unable to meet this need.

Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH)

Since 2009, SPS’s Crime Free Multi-Housing (CFMH) program has partnered with community to reduce crime in multi-family apartments and condominium properties.

CFMH takes a proactive, practical approach using: education for housing staff and residents; on-going communication and support and; inspections to assess and guide building security. A summary of our 2023 work, (*right*), details the broad reach of CFMH’s public education and security training work.

The diversity of properties engaged in CFMH’s program range from luxury condos to trailer parks, new to decaying rental buildings, and from social housing to large, corporate rental companies. There are currently 1,034 buildings across Saskatoon that actively participate as CFMH community partners in crime prevention activities. CFMH works with 54 housing companies.



Training and Community Events

As well as empowering residents and staff to stay more secure at work and at home, CFMH training offers other SPS units a valuable opportunity to share their expertise with the broad community. Examples of this from 2023 include:

- Our *Phase 1 Building Security Training*, (offered twice and available online), had Community Liaison Officers sharing tips for increased awareness of one’s situation and environment. Information on how SPS responds to drug sales and gangs is also shared.
- Community Liaison Officers worked with CFMH at public events such as the *Spotlight on Seniors Trade Show*, *Sask Poly Tech’s Newcomer Student Fair*, the *SPS Community BBQ* and *SPS Volunteer Appreciation Dinner*. All these events helped build positive relationships between the Police and a diverse public.
- In a sold-out *Death, Drugs and Disastrous Messes: What to Do* training, SPS Street Crime officers educated about what drugs are in our city and, where they may be hidden in apartments;

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- The *De-escalate Conflict and Keep Safe at Work* training facilitated by an SPS Crisis Negotiator, highlighted how SPS protects the public at high-risk situations and, how rental housing staff can increase their own safety at work;
- Two *CFMH Community Events* with tenants at large seniors' residences gave SPS officers in the Economic Crime Unit a large audience to discuss how to avoid fraud;
- CFMH coordinated an officer, knowledgeable about gangs, to speak to Mainstreet Equity's property managers;
- For the *CFMH Rent your Condo Safely and Reduce Crime* training, numerous local TV, radio and billboard ads informed the public about the CFMH program and, demonstrated how Saskatoon Police care about residents.

Daytime/ Nighttime Security Audits

In 2023 CFMH staff assessed, during the day and at nighttime, the security features at 432 buildings. Property managers and buildings owners received a comprehensive inspection report that encouraged them to fix any security deficiencies. Low-cost solutions are suggested. A new, more succinct inspection report template was created which shares photographic examples of good security features CFMH staff have seen in diverse, Saskatoon buildings. Here below is what CFMH assesses during our inspections.



On-going Support and Communication

CFMH has become a reliable, sought-after information resource for the Saskatoon rental industry. Almost daily, 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/week.

CFMH Staffing

CFMH functions effectively with two full-time employees – a Coordinator and an Assistant Coordinator. CFMH staff receive tremendous support and relevant guidance from the Sergeant responsible for the Vulnerable Persons Unit. As part of the Community Engagement division, we learn much from police officers who form culturally-responsive relationships with community.

Current Initiatives and Challenges

In 2023, CFMH shared 2,649 Calls for Service specifically related to ‘suspicious persons’ inside or near multi-family buildings. Many of these calls were sparked by unhoused persons inhabiting residential building stairwells and lobbies, often because they don’t have access to affordable housing. Unhoused people are vulnerable to assault, theft, overdose death and, they themselves can pose a significant challenge to tenants, building owners, property managers and maintenance staff.

CFMH submitted an Internal Issue report to the Chief and Executive outlining *Insight into the Financial Impact of Homelessness on SPS Resources*. CFMH staff participated in three large studies examining homelessness and possible solutions, led by the City of Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan, Metis Nation, and a federally-funded Reaching Home research project. CFMH’s inspection and communication with the staff at St. Mary’s Church, (at 20th St W/Ave O S), helped to create a nighttime drop-in center, which is staffed by the Salvation Army and accommodates over 80 persons/night this winter

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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Reviewed by: Edward Panamaroff, Inspector, Community Engagement Division
Approved by: Tonya Gresty, Superintendent, Specialized Uniform Operations Division
Cameron McBride, Deputy Chief, Operations
Submitted by: Dave Haye, Chief of Police

APPENDIX A

SASKATOON HUB—Success Story

History: This family, comprised of a single mother and her four children, reached out to the school for support with their utility arrears as they were on the brink of having their power cut off. Mom had been struggling with grief from the recent loss of her mother. She had no other healthy supports and found it difficult to ask for help. The paternal grandmother was trying to gain custody of children and that was causing this mother a great deal of stress. Two of the children have developmental delays.

Possible Harmful Outcomes:

- * Homelessness
- * Mental Health
- * Family Separation
- * Violence

Outcome: The HUB team accepted this discussion the same day the power was cut off to the home. It was also learned on our first contact that the Mother was a victim of a violent crime and the teenage youth was reported to be using drugs and not attending school regularly.

HUB was able to connect with a community support to fund the arrears and have the power turned back immediately. This action allowed for the Mother to build trust with our HUB agencies which allowed for the family to connect to the much needed supports and services they required. These services include: connections to a pediatrician for the children, Jordan's Principle applications to cover the full amount of arrears to prevent the family from being evicted and homeless were removed, private counselling for Mom to support her mental health and mental health outreach for the teenage youth. A younger child with developmental delays has now started school and is attending regularly. This connection was very important to Mom, as it allowed her some time to complete housing applications and attend a RentEd program offered by SHA to assist families looking to rent in Saskatoon that may not have a good housing reference. STC is supporting the family with a parenting support referral and connections with White Buffalo. The Mental Health Youth Navigators are also connected with the family and supporting Mom with reporting a domestic abuse situation that she may never have reported but felt safe and supported to ask for help.

They have secured housing in a new location and will continue to be connected with supports and services outside the HUB table.

Referred by:

- * Greater Saskatoon Catholic School

Demographics:

- * Mental Health
- * Family

Referral reasons:

- * Basic Needs not able to meet
- * Cognitive Impairment
- * Mental Health Grief
- * Emotional Violence
- * Social Environment – Negative neighborhood
- * Poverty

Assisting Agencies:

Sask Housing SHA
 Saskatoon Public School
 Mental Health Outreach
 Saskatoon Tribal Council
 Income Assistance
 Saskatoon Police Service
 Community Corrections



SASKATOON HUB—Success Story

History: This family went through a break up and the mother left the family unit. The father is now staying home to take care of the children. The mother had been struggling with alcohol addiction for many years but was able to hold down a job in another province. Since the separation the dad has struggled to support his family. He had never been in charge of the finances and did not have a bank card or the understanding to navigate the supports that his family needs. This family was very close to homelessness.

Possible Harmful Outcomes:

- * Homelessness
- * Mental Health
- * Poverty
- * Family Separated

Outcome: This father did not have any of his own income and there were many barriers for him to get on financial assistance. He did not have a bank card and was not sure how to navigate the supports they required. The children did not have health cards as they had last been in another province, nor did they have any other personal documents for the children. They have been residents of Saskatchewan for over 5 years.

The father had assumed his partner had been doing their income tax but found that was not the case. The Income Tax had not been filed for many, many years — meaning that he had not been receiving any child tax credit funding. He was in arrears with the City of Saskatoon and unable pay his rent. He has a medical diagnosis that would allow him to qualify for the SAID (Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability) program through Income Assistance. He had to miss a scheduled surgery because he had no one to watch his children. He had a daughter who is connected to CLSD but had not been receiving any supports as they had no phone or wifi.

This family had many barriers to overcome and supports obtained by the Hub team enabled Dad to open bank account, Income tax completion, housing applications, connection to Victim Services (witness to violence and required counselling), CLSD support with disability tax claims and a re-connection with youth and offer of respite, Birth Certificates and Health card applications completed and Income assistance SAID application completed. The eldest child with disabilities is now enrolled in an Alternative Education Work Study (AEWS) program and all the children are attending school regularly.

With HUB support, the family was able to maintain housing to keep the family together. The Father was able to understand how to connect with multiple supports in our community with confidence.

Referred by:

- * Saskatoon Public School

Demographics:

- * Miscellaneous
- * Family

Referral reasons:

- * Housing
- * Mental Health diagnosed problem
- * Poverty
- * Alcohol—abuse in the home
- * Emotional Violence
- * Physical Health

Assisting Agencies:

Sask Housing SHA
Mental Health Outreach
Community Living Service
Income Assistance
Saskatoon Police Service

