

# The impact of COVID-19 on Canadians' mental health + substance use

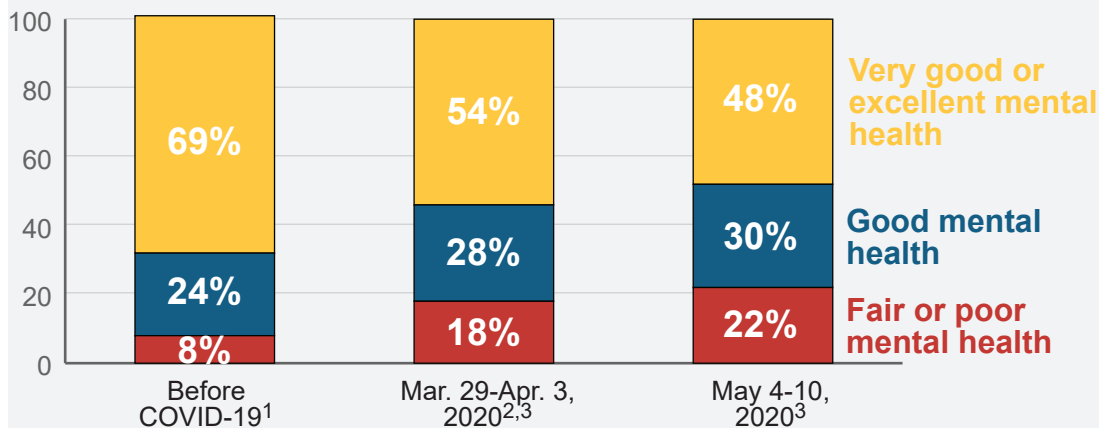
## What AHS leaders need to know

- A summary of recent addiction & mental health (AMH) statistics & data.
- Alberta Health Services' (AHS') & Provincial AMH's response to address the needs of Albertans during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration & next steps in the COVID-19 AMH response.

## In Canada:

### Mental health has declined

● Just over half of Canadians say their mental health has declined.<sup>1</sup>



The number of Canadians who rated their mental health as **fair or poor** increased from 8% in 2018, to 22% in early May 2020.

**Moderate to severe anxiety increased for:**

**41%** of Canadians who reported worse mental health.<sup>1</sup>

**43%** of Canadians who reported significant impacts to their ability to meet financial obligations.<sup>1</sup>

### Certain populations are more likely to have worsening mental health & high anxiety<sup>4-8</sup>

- Youth
- Women
- Gender diverse
- Visible minorities
- Recent immigrants
- Indigenous Peoples

## Alcohol, cannabis & tobacco use increased for:



**14%**  
of Canadians<sup>9</sup>

- Alcohol consumption increased due to:<sup>10</sup>
  - A lack of regular schedule
  - Boredom
  - Stress



**7%**  
of Canadians<sup>9</sup>

- Canadians who reported lower self-perceived mental health were more likely to report an increase in alcohol, cannabis & tobacco use.<sup>9</sup>

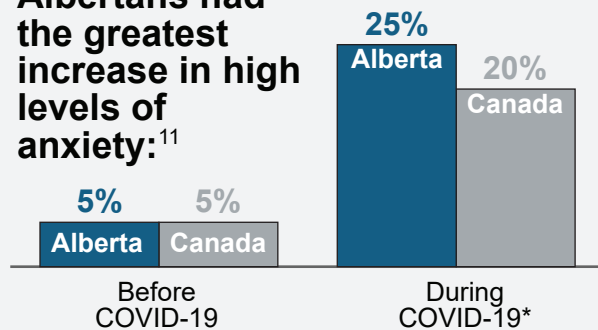


**3%**  
of Canadians<sup>9</sup>

## In Alberta:

### Mental health & finances are a particular concern for Albertans since COVID-19

Albertans had the greatest increase in high levels of anxiety:<sup>11</sup>



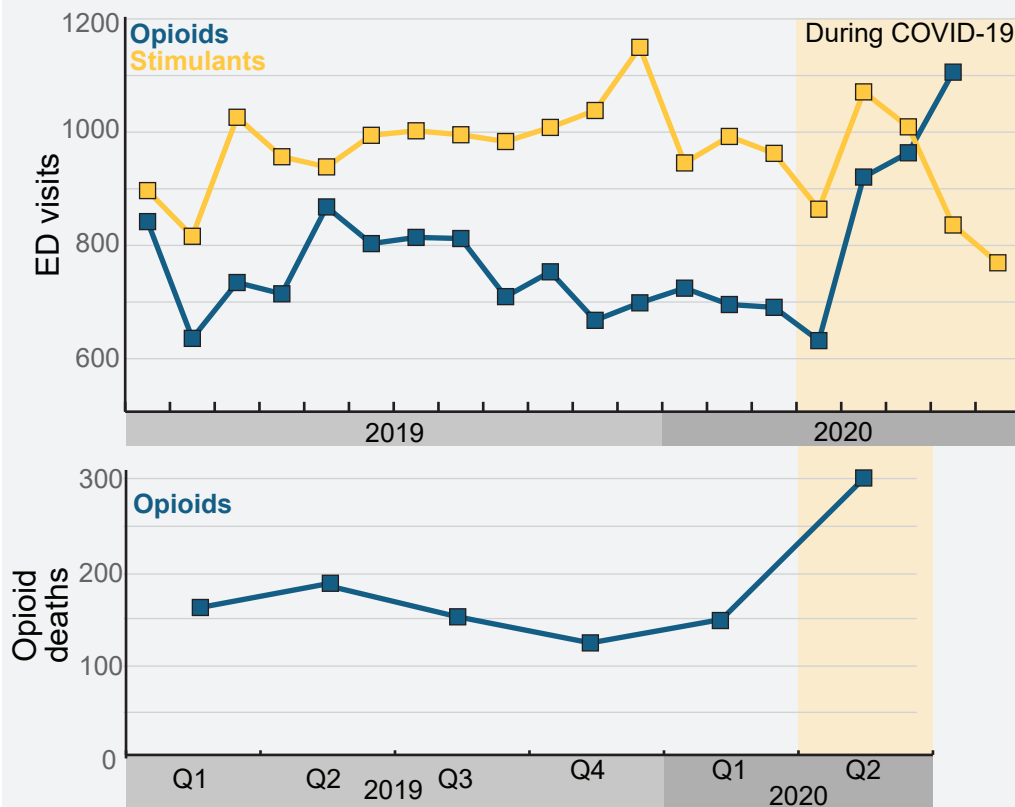
Albertans are most likely to have worsening **mental & financial health**<sup>12</sup>



**32% Albertans** reported their mental health & financial situation had worsened, compared to 26% Canadians.

\*April 22-28, 2020.

### Surveillance data shows some peaks in opioid & stimulant use during the pandemic



Emergency Department (ED) visits for **opioids** have peaked during the pandemic.

ED visits for **stimulants** increased in May and June 2020, but have since decreased.

**Opioid deaths** have peaked during the pandemic, reaching the highest numbers since reporting began in 2016.

**Opioid deaths** doubled between Q1 and Q2 of 2020.

See AHS [Opioid](#) & [Stimulant](#) Dashboards

# To address AMH issues during COVID-19, AHS AMH is working to introduce & expand a variety of programs & initiatives

The following initiatives are coordinated by Provincial AMH. [Additional services](#) such as acute & tertiary specialized services are ongoing & also part of the COVID-19 response.



## Text4Hope

[Free text messaging service](#) to help people identify & adjust negative thoughts & behaviours associated with the pandemic



## Togetherall

Anonymous, free, peer-to-peer [support](#) in a secure & welcoming environment, monitored by mental health professionals



## e-Mental Health

Implement a [new program](#) that aims to address the AMH issues of youth & young adults



## Addiction Helpline & Mental Health Helpline

Increase the capacity of the helpline to enhance support for Albertans experiencing AMH concerns during the pandemic



## Virtual appointments

Expand the use of virtual health to facilitate AMH care & appointments



## HeartMath

Free, virtual [AHS workshop](#) that helps identify & transform stress



## Psychological first aid

Provide [virtual training](#) to people to prepare them to respond to those in crisis in a respectful way



## Addiction bed expansion

4000 additional publicly-funded residential addiction treatment & medical detox spaces



## Family violence services

Expand assessment, intervention & treatment services for individuals in Indigenous, rural & remote communities



## Alberta addiction education sessions

Academic lectures & live-actor simulations facilitated by a panel of AMH clinicians & PWLE. [Livestreamed](#) monthly.



## Reduce problematic technology use

A collection of resources to help children, youth & families with problematic technology use



## AMH COVID-19 research grant

[Award funds](#) for researchers to study AMH issues affected by COVID-19



## Weekly data reporting

Statistics on AMH service usage to help inform planning

[- ED Dashboard](#)  
[- MH Visits Dashboard](#)  
[- Community & Helpline Dashboard](#)



## AMH COVID-19 Digest

A [newsletter](#) to collect the latest research findings & information about AMH issues affected by COVID-19

**We hope this will highlight needs & address gaps. What are the next steps in the AMH COVID-19 response?**

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