

CASA Mental Health to Embed Services into Calgary Schools

CASA Mental Health is bringing mental health services directly to kids where they live and learn.

CASA Classrooms are a new model of school-based mental health service, in conjunction with the Government of Alberta Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction, Ministry of Education and Alberta school divisions.

This September, two CASA Classrooms will launch in Calgary within St. Cyril School and Bishop Carroll High School. One classroom will launch in High River out of Senator Riley School.

These Calgary-area classrooms are three of nine opening across Alberta in September. Eight CASA Classrooms are already serving kids and families throughout Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Sturgeon County and Wetaskiwin. With these new classrooms up and running, the CASA Classrooms program can provide up to 408 Alberta children and youth with much-needed services annually.

“Supporting the mental, physical and spiritual wellness of our students is a priority for the Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD). Our new partnership with CASA Mental Health reflects our commitment to support student well-being by providing accessible, individualized supports to address mental health needs, ensuring every CCSD student can realize their full potential.”

—Dr. Bryan Szumlas, Chief Superintendent, Calgary Catholic School District

“We are looking forward to launch the CASA Classroom in Foothills School Division, reflecting our unwavering commitment to placing education at the centre of a flourishing community. This opportunity is a testament to our collaborative efforts with CASA Mental Health and the Government of Alberta to create safe, welcoming, respectful, and inclusive learning environments.”

-Chris Fuzessy, Superintendent of Schools, Foothills School Division

CASA Classrooms address the need for services closer to students by bridging a child’s mental health and school needs, through a coordinated approach by a mental health team and a teacher. By providing mental health services directly in the school, there is no need for caregivers to schedule appointments and take time off work. Youth receive the support they need in a location already built in to their lives.

“In CASA Classrooms, students receive individual and group therapy, medical care and school programming to support their individual needs. We’re also preparing parents to support them at home. Caregivers receive mental health education and connections to community supports. School staff receive similar support to ensure the child’s success in the classroom after the program ends.”

-Dena Pedersen, Director, Clinical Operations, CASA Mental Health

CASA Classrooms serve children and teens with mental health challenges. These youth have not responded as expected to previous therapy, and experience symptoms that impact their home, social and school lives. The Calgary classrooms will serve students in grades seven through 12. The High River classroom will serve students in grades six to 10.

News Release CASA Mental Health

“I am excited to see more children and families able to access CASA Mental Health through CASA Classrooms. After many years as a principal, I saw firsthand the benefits of mental health classrooms. I also experienced the impact CASA makes on kids and families. CASA saves lives. School-based supports decrease the risk of treatment in hospitals by providing services in the setting where children and teens learn, grow and thrive.”

-Janet Hancock, Board Chair, CASA Mental Health

“Services like this are important to the long-term success and well-being of children and youth who are right now facing some very difficult challenges with their mental health. Every kid deserves to know that help is available, and that they can recover and live fulfilling lives. Our government is going to continue with investments like this that change the lives of children, youth and their families.”

-Dan Williams, Minister of Mental Health and Addiction

CASA plans to continue expanding the program throughout the province in the next two years as part of its five-year roadmap to improve the future of mental health service for children, youth and families in Alberta.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

- Anna York, Communications Specialist, CASA Mental Health
587-985-3885 (cell) or ayork@casaservices.org
- Darby Semeniuk, Director, Corporate and Community Relations, CASA Mental Health
780-619-5332 (cell) or dsemeniuk@casaservices.org

About CASA Mental Health

CASA Mental Health is a non-profit, accredited provider of clinical mental health services, delivering holistic, culturally-safe wrap-around services to Albertans aged three to 18 and their families. CASA provides mental health service to the “missing middle” – therapeutic and medical treatment for children and youth, in between prevention and promotion in primary and community care, and acute treatment in hospital.

CASA’s team of mental health professionals are trauma experts committed to delivering service in collaboration with community partners. This includes assessment and treatment for thousands of children, youth and families each year, from community outreach settings to intensive treatment programs.

For more information about CASA Mental Health, including getting help or giving help, please visit www.casamentalhealth.org.

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