

ALBERTA
INJURY  **CONTROL**
STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary

*Injuries in Alberta are unacceptably high with Alberta having one of the highest rates in Canada. Given these concerns, a broad range of stakeholders involved in the field of injury control came together to develop a coordinated and collaborative strategy to address injury control in Alberta. The Alberta Injury Control Strategy (AICS) was developed with the assistance of an Advisory Steering Committee and reviewed and validated by stakeholders across the province through regional and provincial consultation sessions. This executive summary contains the highlights of the Alberta Injury Control Strategy.**

The Alberta Injury Control Strategy provides a framework to guide effective planning and implementation of injury control initiatives among all stakeholders in the injury control field in Alberta.

What do we mean by injury and injury control?

The terms injury and injury control can mean different things to different people. While the term injury has a technical definition, it may be viewed as a broad term that encompasses numerous situations in which people are hurt or killed. Injury control is an all-encompassing term that includes injury prevention, and in the event of an injury, emergency response, acute care, and rehabilitation. The focus is on preventing injuries in the first place, but when injuries do occur, the provision of quality emergency response, acute care and rehabilitation services can affect the long-term outcome of the injury. This strategy addresses the full continuum of injury control with a focus on injury prevention.

Injury includes both unintentional and intentional injuries. Unintentional injuries result from incidents such as motor vehicle collisions, falls, fires/burns, drowning, and poisonings. Intentional injuries result from incidents such as suicide, personal assault, family violence and homicide. Intentional injuries are just that; actions taken that are intended to injure one-self or others.

What are some things we know about Alberta's injuries?

- Falls, motor vehicle collisions, fire, suffocation, suicide and self-inflicted injury are major causes of injury death.
- Injuries are the leading cause of premature death and account for the majority of deaths of those aged 44 and under.
- Burden of injury is highest in the disadvantaged population.
- Indigenous people and people who live in rural and remote areas are at high risk of injury.
- Injury deaths and morbidity cost the health system, the economy and society billions of dollars annually.

What are the injury control issues?

When it comes to injuries, Alberta faces a significant task. What is at the root of the problem? What needs to be understood and acted upon if the injury situation in Alberta is to be changed?

Six major challenges were identified:

- Poor awareness, understanding, acceptance and ownership of injury as a major health and safety issue.
- Under-developed coordination, collaboration and communication among stakeholders.

* For a complete list of stakeholders involved with the AICS, please see the full report, or contact ACICR.

- Under-resourced programs and services, including no designated and long-term sustained funding for injury control initiatives.
- Public and community stigma attached to intentional injuries such as suicide.
- Lack of timely, comprehensive, standardized, consistent and accurate reporting and data on injuries.
- Limited research and program evaluation on the effectiveness of injury control interventions.

Who's Responsible for Alberta's Injury Control Strategy?

Everyone has a responsibility for making Alberta the safest place to live. Injuries can happen wherever people live, work, play and learn. Everyone needs to be vigilant to the factors—human, agent/vehicle, physical environment or socio-cultural environment—that can contribute to injuries.

This means that everyone has a responsibility including individual Albertans and their families, communities, community-based and not-for-profit organizations, regional health authorities, professional groups, education system, business and industry, and the municipal, provincial and federal governments.

Overview of the Alberta Injury Control Strategy

Vision

Making Alberta the Safest Place to Live

Mission

Contribute to a healthy Alberta and healthy Albertans by:

- Engaging Albertans in making the injury issue a priority.
- Reducing the frequency and severity of injuries in Alberta.
- Reducing the impact of and improving the outcomes for those affected by injury.

Strategic Goals

1. Increase the awareness and commitment of Albertans to injury prevention.
2. Promote the development and enforcement of healthy public policies and legislation aimed at injury prevention.
3. Build and sustain the capacity and capability to deliver effective injury prevention programs.
4. Increase the availability of and access to comprehensive provincial injury surveillance data.
5. Increase research and program evaluation on injury causes, injury programs and practices.
6. Optimize emergency response, acute care and rehabilitation services to those who are affected by injury.
7. Strengthen partnerships among injury control stakeholders.

Stakeholders Involved

- Individual Albertan and their families.
- Injury survivors.
- Communities.
- Community-based and not-for-profit organizations.
- Professional groups.
- Health authorities.
- Education system.
- Business and industry.
- Industry.
- Municipal governments.
- Provincial government.
- Federal government.

Values and Underlying Principles

- Injury prevention focus and attitude.
- Holistic focus on people and their environments.
- Shared Responsibility.
- Strong stakeholder coordination and collaboration.
- Diverse strategies.
- Competency and organizational capacity.
- Quality programs and services.
- Evidence-based practices.

Focus on the future — making Alberta the safest place to live! By effectively addressing injuries, more Albertans will be able to live safe, healthy lives and be free from the impact of injuries.

How to do this—pursue the mission:

- Engage Albertans in making the injury issue a priority.
- Reduce the frequency and severity of injuries.
- Reduce the impact of and improve the outcomes for those affected by injury.

Build integrity—adhere to the values. Everyone has a responsibility in building a safer Alberta. With a shared vision and common values, safety can become an integral part of Albertan's well-being.

Target resources effectively—prioritize the strategies. Use resources wisely in addressing the strategies that will have the most impact on the issues unique to a particular situation.

Monitor the outcomes—celebrate success. Stay focused on the end point—the results to be achieved and make adjustments along the way. Then celebrate the achievements!

What are the outcomes of the Alberta Injury Control Strategy?

The seven goals of the Alberta Injury Control Strategy, along with the corresponding objectives and recommended actions for each, are outlined here.

Goals

Goal 1.0

Increase the awareness and commitment of Albertans to injury prevention

1.1 Albertans will be aware and knowledgeable about injuries and their prevention.

Recommended Actions

- Raise awareness about the concept of injury.
- Raise awareness and acceptance that injuries can be prevented.
- Encourage positive attitudes towards and social norms supporting injury prevention.
- Develop, implement and evaluate education and community-based programs and public information campaigns aimed at high injury areas, targeting the public, professionals, media and policy makers.
- Convene injury-related forums to focus on issues likely to influence the development of effective injury prevention interventions.
- Provide opportunities for public and private investment in injury prevention strategies and programs.
- Encourage integration of injury prevention strategies in related provincial and organizational business plans.
- Encourage local governments to create safer environments.
- Use "champions", including injury survivors, to advance knowledge and awareness about injury priorities.

1.2 Albertans will take actions to reduce the major causes of injury.

Recommended Actions

- Implement and build on existing and proposed injury control strategies such as *A Strategic Plan to Reduce Impaired Driving In Alberta. A Ten Year Plan*; *The Healthy Alberta Prevention and Promotion Policy Framework*, *Alberta Occupant Restraint Program*; *Alberta Suicide Prevention Strategy*; *Alberta Workplace Safety 2.0*; *Alberta Disability Strategy*; and the *Spinal Cord Injury Collaboration*.
- Develop and support new provincial strategies to fill gaps for leading causes of injury.
- Encourage integration of injury prevention strategies in related provincial and organizational business plans.
- Develop and implement an injury prevention strategy in collaboration with Aboriginal communities to address the unique needs of Aboriginal people.
- Develop an attitude of safety in the schools through curricula and hands-on practice to integrate injury prevention and job safety into all areas of living.
- Support graduated driver licensing to develop safe driving skills and attitudes among new drivers.
- Promote child traffic safety initiatives to establish life-long learning about traffic safety such as pedestrian safety, school bus safety, etc.
- Support aquatic safety initiatives.
- Promote farm safety and management assessment tools to encourage farm businesses to implement health and safety plans.
- Promote a culture of safety in all environments and across all sectors.
- Encourage a community development approach to injury prevention.
- Promote the "Safe Community" model throughout the province.
- Provide incentives that promote positive injury prevention behaviours and environmental changes.

goals continued >

Goals

Goal 2.0

Promote the development and enforcement of healthy public policies and legislation aimed at injury prevention

2.1 Healthy public policies and legislation will be used to support injury prevention.

Recommended Actions

- Implement legislative and policy reforms to support injury prevention based on evidence of benefits and costs.
- Promote and support compliance with legislation and policies that support and facilitate injury prevention.
- Enforce legislation and policies that support and facilitate injury prevention.
- Evaluate the impact of legislation and policy from an injury prevention perspective.
- Address issues regarding the number and education of enforcement officers, priorities of enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system.
- Advocate for healthy public policies and regulations at the municipal, provincial and federal levels to reflect best practices in injury prevention.

Goal 3.0

Build and sustain the capacity and capability to deliver effective injury prevention programs

3.1 Sustainable funding and other resources will be available to deliver effective injury prevention programs.

Recommended Actions

- Enhance and sustain designated funding for provincial, regional and community injury prevention initiatives based on

best or promising evidence, consistent with full social impact of injury and the potential for prevention.

- Promote and support the development and provision of injury prevention in post secondary education curricula and training for professionals.

Goal 4.0

Increase availability of and access to comprehensive provincial injury surveillance data

4.1 A comprehensive provincial injury surveillance system will be operating for systematic injury data collection, integration, analyses, interpretation and dissemination.

Recommended Actions

- Develop and implement a comprehensive provincial injury surveillance system in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Establish and require collection and submission of data on key injury indicators.
- Facilitate access to and dissemination of injury data to stakeholders, assuring that legitimate privacy provisions are in place.
- Facilitate training of practitioners and others in the collection and interpretation of injury surveillance data.
- Promote funding and support of the Alberta Trauma Registry by Province-wide Services in Alberta Health and Wellness.

Goal 5.0

Increase research and program evaluation on injury causes, injury programs and practices

5.1 Research will be increased on risk and preventative factors, cause of injury and evidence-based injury control practices.

Recommended Actions

- Identify specific research gaps surrounding injury risk and preventative factors, causes and injury control practices.
- Promote and encourage research on injury risk and preventative factors, causes and injury control initiatives with academic centres, researchers and funders.
- Identify and disseminate information on injury risk and preventative factors, causes and effective injury control practices based on research findings.
- Encourage organizations such as the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research and the Canadian Institute of Health Research to dedicate special funding for increasing the capacity in injury research.
- Work with the Canadian Injury Research Network in advancing injury prevention and control research.

5.2 Evaluations will be an integral component of all injury control programs and services.

Recommended Actions

- Facilitate evaluations of new and existing injury control programs and initiatives.
- Facilitate and support development and continuous improvement of evaluation knowledge and skills among those providing injury control programs.
- Support the continuous improvement of injury control programs and initiatives through the evaluation feedback loop.
- Identify and disseminate information on effective injury control practices based on program evaluations.

Goal 6.0

Optimize emergency response, acute care and rehabilitation services to those who are affected by injury

6.1 Emergency response, acute care and rehabilitation programs will provide comprehensive injury assessments and transport, acute hospital care and quality rehabilitative care to those persons injured, their families and other significant supports.

Recommended Actions

- Implement the recommendations from the Alberta Provincial Trauma System Proposal and the Spinal Cord Injury Collaboration.
- Support the Spinal Cord Injury Collaboration in establishing priorities and strategies in the area of service delivery to persons with spinal cord injuries.
- Support the full implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Alberta Disability Strategy.
- Implement recommendations of the Ambulance Review Board including access to 911 and advanced life support.
- Identify existing gaps and needs in the provision of comprehensive injury assessments through emergency response, acute care and rehabilitation.
- Identify, develop and promote integration of quality standards of care and best practices for emergency, acute care and rehabilitation.
- Implement specific questions addressing injury assessment and care in patient and family satisfaction surveys.
- Develop and implement a provincial injury rehabilitation strategy to enhance re-

integration of injured persons into their homes, workplaces and communities.

- Identify existing gaps and needs in the provision of emergency, acute care and rehabilitation services to people presenting with intentional injuries.

Goal 7.0

Strengthen partnerships among injury control stakeholders

7.1 Stakeholders will be effectively communicating, coordinating, and collaborating on injury control initiatives.

Recommended Actions

- Develop and support provincial working committees to plan and coordinate efforts in each major injury area.
- Develop provincial, regional and local coalitions to address injury priorities.
- Encourage the sharing of human, financial and material resources among stakeholders involved in injury control initiatives.
- Facilitate use of websites such as the Health in Action for the sharing of injury control initiatives and evidence-based practices.

What are the next steps?

Alberta's injury challenge is significant. Five recommendations are key to its successful implementation:

- Enhance provincial coordination and collaboration. Authorize and approve the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR) with a broad provincial mandate and broad stakeholder endorsement for injury control coordination and collaboration support.
- Develop and sell the business case. Develop a compelling business case to reinforce the cost benefits of effective injury prevention programs, followed by effective treatment, management and rehabilitation services.others.
- Develop an implementation plan. Entrust the coordinating body of ACICR and a broadened advisory body of stakeholders to develop a plan for implementing the Alberta Injury Control Strategy.
- Facilitate stakeholder development of injury control plans. Stakeholders need to participate in, contribute to and collaborate on the development of provincial, regional and local injury control initiatives.
- Monitor implementation and report progress. Stakeholders need to contribute annual information and data on their injury control programs as part of the overall, annual monitoring of the strategy.

Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research

University of Alberta
4075 RTF, 8308 - 114 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6G 2E1
Phone: (780) 492-6019
Fax: (780) 492-7154
E-mail: acicr@ualberta.ca
Website: www.med.ualberta.ca/acicr