

Backgrounder

Health Update in La Loche

Community leaders are playing a key role in the development of a Community Health and Wellness action plan to ensure that what is proposed is locally supported, culturally appropriate and takes a holistic approach. In addition to other elements, the plan will include training, mentorships and opportunities targeted to students for greater community employment opportunities.

There are two mental health counsellors and two addictions workers that currently provide counseling services in the community of La Loche.

The Keewatin Yathee Health Region has hired an additional community mental health nurse, as well as a suicide prevention/community wellness worker who are part of the team of mental health and addictions professionals available to the community. Access to 24/7 services is provided and coordinated through the La Loche Health Centre.

Individuals can also access Saskatchewan HealthLine by dialing 811. Healthline 811 is a free 24-hour health information and support telephone line which can provide confidential mental health support from an experienced registered nurse, registered psychiatric nurse or social worker.

The number of licensed psychiatrists in Saskatchewan has increased from 87 in 2007 to 107 in 2016.

Northern Medical Services (NMS) provides funding support for co-ordination of monthly visiting psychiatry services in La Loche and other northern communities. Additional psychiatry services are available via Telehealth. The Government of Saskatchewan allocated \$13.7 million to NMS in 2016-17.

The Keewatin Yatthe 2016-17 budget supports the Region's plan to provide:

- a 24-hour security service at the La Loche Health Centre;
- an upgrade to IT equipment; and
- the completion of a mental health and addictions needs assessment.

In March 2016, the Ministry of Health provided \$480,000 for priority capital projects identified by the Health Region for the La Loche Health Centre, including funding towards additional security, Wi-Fi connectivity (to enhance access to electronic health services and cellular telephone service), and a new x-ray machine.