

Cross-Ministry Action Plan - Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying

ACTION PLAN: 2008-2011

Our Goal

To work towards an Alberta free from family violence and bullying through a coordinated provincial response to family violence and bullying with strengthened community-based, comprehensive services and supports for children and other family members who witness, or are victims of family violence or bullying, and programs to prevent perpetrators from re-offending

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early 2004, a comprehensive province-wide roundtable process on family violence and bullying was undertaken. The goal of the process was to engage a wide range of stakeholders and community members in discussions about family violence and bullying and to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations for action. As a result of the consultation process, the *Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying: Finding Solutions Together* report was approved by government in October 2004 as the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying.

Family violence and bullying have devastating impacts on Albertans. In 2004, the highest reported rate of spousal assault in Canada was in Alberta (10% women; 7% men).¹ Exposure to family violence is the second most common form of child maltreatment; accounting for 23% of all substantiated cases in Alberta.² Aboriginal people are three times more likely to experience spousal assault, and more severe forms of violence.³ A recent survey of Alberta children and youth found that 56% had been bullied in the past school year.⁴

Several new initiatives have been implemented or expanded since the 2004 Roundtable as identified on page six, to better support Albertans impacted by family violence and bullying.

Participating ministries involved in the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Initiative are committed to the ongoing implementation of the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying, by providing coordinated provincial responses through ongoing prevention, protection, intervention/counselling, and outreach supports. Partnering ministries include:

- Children and Youth Services (coordination lead);
- Aboriginal Relations;
- Education;
- Employment and Immigration;
- Health and Wellness, including Alberta Health Services - AADAC and Alberta Health Services - Alberta Mental Health Board;
- Housing and Urban Affairs;
- Justice and Attorney General;
- Seniors and Community Supports; and
- Solicitor General and Ministry of Public Security.

The complex issues related to family violence and bullying prevention are expanded upon in the report *Finding Solutions Together*. Children and Youth Services, as coordination lead, will continue to work with partnering ministries and communities in addressing the five key areas of action as summarized on page 3.

Appendix 1 – Significant Challenges and Opportunities – identifies the emerging trends that have helped shape future priorities within the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Initiative.

Partnering ministries remain committed to implementing priorities within the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying and in providing annual reporting to define the progress of new and ongoing initiatives.

Continuum of Services/Supports

Key Strategies for Action

- Social change
- Provincial leadership
- A collaborative, co-ordinated community response
- Services and supports
- Accountability



Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Key Areas for Action

Social change

- Change public awareness, knowledge and attitudes
- Invest in our society
- Focus on prevention and education
- Place a higher priority on early intervention
- Expand mentoring and community leadership
- Address stereotypes and racism involving Aboriginal people and communities*

Provincial leadership

- Establish enabling legislation
- Maintain a long-term sustainable commitment
- Enhance the cross-ministry approach
- Establish a single, cross sector agency to take the lead
- Respect and address Aboriginal jurisdictional issues through cooperation among Aboriginal, federal and provincial governments*

A collaborative, coordinated community response

- Establish a collaborative, coordinated community model
- Provide support for collaboration
- Establish long-term sustainable community solutions
- Expand the use of multi-disciplinary teams
- Expand education and training for those who work with Aboriginal communities*
- Provide cross sector training
- Ensure that essential information can be shared
- Build Aboriginal community resources and capacity*

Services and supports

- Ensure equitable access to services and supports
- Establish a single point of access to services and supports
- Enable safe reporting
- Ensure advocates are available for victims
- Expand the availability of emergency/safe housing
- Provide transitional support(s)
- Provide treatment and counseling
- Ensure adequate protection services
- Address concerns with custody and access disputes
- Ensure that services and supports respond to those affected by family violence and bullying
- Ensure an effective justice response
- Use a holistic approach that reflects Aboriginal culture and tradition*
- Improve access to and availability of services in Aboriginal communities*

Accountability

- Support evidence-based practices and expand community-based research and evaluation, including expanded research in Aboriginal communities
- Establish and track measurable outcomes
- Ensure transparency and clear reporting of outcomes achieved by all partners including community agencies, organizations and provincial ministries
- Reinforce consequences for actions and individual accountability

* This area for action was developed as part of the Aboriginal response identified through the roundtable process.

VISION

An Alberta where children and families are free from family violence and bullying.

MISSION

Government departments and community agencies will work together to break the complex cycle of family violence and bullying and to respond, when necessary, with integrated, seamless services to those affected by family violence and bullying in Alberta.

KEY DEFINITIONS

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence is the abuse of power within relationships of family, trust or dependency that endangers the survival, security or well-being of another person. It can include many forms of abuse including spouse abuse, senior abuse and neglect, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse, parent abuse, and witnessing abuse of others in the family. Family violence may include some or all of the following behaviours: physical abuse, psychological abuse, criminal harassment/stalking, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, and spiritual abuse.

BULLYING

Bullying is a conscious, wilful, deliberate and repeated hostile activity marked by an imbalance of power, intent to harm, and/or a threat of aggression. When bullying escalates unabated, it may lead to a feeling of terror on the part of the individual being bullied. Bullying may include, but is not limited to: physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name calling; threatening looks, gestures or actions; cruel rumours; false accusation and social isolation.

LINK TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA BUSINESS PLAN

Government's 20 year Strategic Plan:

The vision for Alberta's future set out in the Government of Alberta's 20 year strategic plan is: a vibrant and prosperous province where Albertans enjoy a superior quality of life and are confident about the future for themselves, their children and their families. Children, families and individual Albertans cannot enjoy Alberta's outstanding quality of life or be confident about their futures if they are exposed to, or experience family violence or bullying. In supporting the opportunity of making Alberta the best place to live, work and visit, a medium-term strategy for the prevention of family violence and bullying was established.

Government's 2008/2011 Business Plan:

One of government's five key priorities is to promote strong and vibrant communities and reduce crime so Albertans feel safe. Continued implementation of the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Initiative is a key strategy that supports this government priority. The Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying supports the following Government of Alberta's Business Plan Goals:

- Albertans will be independent and our children will be well cared for (Goal 6).
- Alberta will be a safe place to live, work and raise families (Goal 7).

Government's priority to prevent family violence and bullying is founded on a comprehensive province-wide roundtable process held in 2004. This Roundtable's final report, *Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying: Finding Solutions Together*, recognizes that family violence is everybody's business and establishes a framework for action involving all partners – governments, communities, community organizations and agencies, Aboriginal people, business and industry leaders, and individual Albertans.

Recognizing the need for a coordinated approach to address family violence and bullying, Children and Youth Services continues to act as coordination lead, working with eight partnering ministries, to implement government's Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying, including annual updating of the cross-ministry action plan to provide a comprehensive provincial response and provincial leadership, and to encourage and support community actions to prevent family violence and bullying. This plan informs the development of individual ministry business plans and their respective strategic priorities in support of the overall Strategy.

The goal is to work towards an Alberta free from family violence and bullying through a coordinated provincial response to family violence and bullying with strengthened community based, comprehensive services and supports for children and other family members who witness, or are victims of family violence or bullying, and programs to prevent perpetrators from re-offending.

WHAT'S BEEN ACCOMPLISHED

The following major accomplishments have been achieved by the nine partnering ministries involved in the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Initiative to better support individuals, families, and communities impacted by family violence and bullying:

- Public Opinion Survey of Albertan's perceptions of family violence and bullying implemented to inform policy planning; baseline developed in 2005; re-administered in 2008; to be re-administered every two years.
- Establishment of regional Family Violence and Bullying Coordinators in each of the ten Child and Family Services Authorities to work with communities to take action locally in addressing family violence and bullying.
- Domestic violence policies were included in the proclamation of the 2004 *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, identifying the impacts to children exposed to family violence.
- Amendments to the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* in November 2006 to enhance protection to victims, including adding stalking to the definition of family violence; recognition of the impacts to children exposed to family violence; protection for vulnerable persons such as seniors; and clarifying the use of Emergency Protection Orders. Comprehensive training and orientation sessions delivered to over 2,000 stakeholders on the amendments.
- Cross-sector training and orientations session provided to over 1700 stakeholders on PAFVA amendments, including Judges, Justices of the Peace, police, Children and Youth Services caseworkers, and community agencies.
- \$15.1M provided to 405 community projects through the Community Incentive Fund in the first four years of the program.
- Implementation of the Provincial Family Violence Program to successfully provide a coordinated approach including eight domestic violence courts, specialized prosecution and court supports, counselling for mandated offenders, supervision and enforcement of court orders and community coordination and victim supports.
- Coordination of the addictions component of the Provincial Family Violence Program by enhancing the referral process, hosting clinical team meetings, and developing in-depth guidelines and case management protocols.
- Implementation of the Alberta Relationship Threat Assessment and Management Initiative (ARTAMI), which is the first unit of its kind in Canada to coordinate the efforts of a multi-disciplinary team of experts to reduce and prevent the fear, suffering, violence and deaths that occur in high-risk relationship violence and stalking cases.
- Implementation of a provincial safe visitation initiative in 2007 for high risk family violence situations with pilot sites established in Calgary, Edmonton, Ft. McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge and Red Deer.
- Development of risk management strategies to assist with effective responses from community responders, including the Family Violence Investigation Report

(FVIR) used by police; and the Screening Aid for Family Violence (SAFV) used by Children and Youth Services caseworkers.

- Family violence resources developed for Albertans, including a two-year family violence campaign targeting family, friends and neighbors on how they can help individuals impacted by family violence; development of publications; and establishment of a family violence information line available 24/7.
- Implementation of a provincial prevention of bullying strategy to raise awareness of what bullying is and to encourage a change in societal attitudes towards bullying. Key initiatives developed include a three-year public awareness and education campaign; resources and websites for children, youth and adults; provincial bullying helpline; workshops; and community supports and grants to address bullying at a local level.
- Increased funding to women's shelters to address issues and challenges for women accessing shelter services. Funding has increased from \$15M in 2004 to over \$25M in 2008/2009.
- Funding to 10 sexual assault centres across the province to offer services to victims of sexual violence in the context of family violence.
- Implementation of financial benefits through Alberta Works to support Albertans fleeing abuse. The range of benefits has increased from a \$1,000 emergency allowance introduced in 2004, to a range of first and second level benefits that help individuals and families get to safety, set up a household and start a new life.
- Implementation of family violence screening in emergency departments for staff to ask emergency room patients if family violence is a problem in their lives or the lives of their children.
- Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) developed between police, social workers, and women's shelters; working protocols established between the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters and Child and Family Services Authorities for working with children in shelters.

OUR FUTURE PRIORITIES

The commitment by partnering ministries to implement the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Cross-Ministry Action Plan is demonstrated through the collective strategies and results identified in the Strategy's Action Plan, and through priorities identified in individual ministry business plans. Priority strategies include:

New and Emerging Priorities (2008/2011):

- Support implementation of Alberta's Safe Communities Task Force recommendations in the area of prevention of family violence and bullying by:
 - Expanding supports to Aboriginal and immigrant families and communities and others impacted by family violence (CYS);
 - Expanding and enhancing supports for counselling of mandated offenders as part of the ongoing implementation of the Provincial Family Violence Program (Health and Wellness/Alberta Mental Health Board, AADAC, Alberta Health Services; Solicitor General and Public Security; Justice and Attorney General; and Children and Youth Services)
- Develop a provincial Elder Abuse Strategy and Framework to enhance services and supports to victims of elder abuse (Seniors and Community Supports)
- Develop a provincial family violence and bullying training framework to support delivery of cross-sector training for front-line responders in providing prevention and intervention strategies (All)
- Develop a victim safety resource kit to assist victims with accessing appropriate services and supports (All)
- Support implementation of the recommendations from the Affordable Housing Task Force and Women's Shelter Program Review to identify ways to better support victims of family violence to transition safely to their homes and communities (Housing and Urban Affairs; Children and Youth Services; Employment and Immigration)
- Evaluate implementation of the provincial safe visitation initiative to determine expansion of the availability and access to safe visitation services and supports (Children and Youth Services; Justice and Attorney General)
- Develop supporting policies and practices for the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* to better support victims of family violence (Children and Youth Services; Justice and Attorney General)

Ongoing:

- Continued implementation of collaborative and coordinated community-based initiatives, including the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Incentive Fund and community coordination and victim supports, to help communities take action on family violence and bullying across Alberta (Children and Youth Services)
- Supporting ongoing implementation of the Alberta Relationship Threat Assessment and Management Initiative (ARTAMI) to reduce family violence and stalking related injuries and deaths (Justice and Attorney General; Solicitor General and Public Security; Children and Youth Services)

- Working with communities, shelter and government partners to address issues faced by women’s shelters and implement strategies for approved recommendations from the Women’s Emergency Shelter Program Review Final Report (Children and Youth Services)
- Continued implementation of the province-wide information sharing initiative to support front-line responders (All)
- Continued implementation of a province-wide bullying prevention strategy, including public awareness and education initiatives, to increase public awareness and improve the capacity of children, youth, parents, and communities to effectively prevent and respond to bullying (Children and Youth Services; Education)
- Development, implementation and monitoring of working protocols to support coordinated and collaborative community responses (All)
- Development and provision of clinical consultation, addictions case management and community capacity building to the Provincial Family Violence Program (Health and Wellness/Alberta Mental Health Board/AADAC, Alberta Health Services; Solicitor General and Public Security; Justice and Attorney General; and Children and Youth Services)

KEY ACTION AREA ONE: SOCIAL CHANGE

KEY ACTION
AREA ONE

1

Prevent family violence and bullying by changing public attitudes and focusing on early intervention

What it means

Building awareness is a prerequisite to changing public perceptions about family violence and bullying. Further, the importance of early childhood development and school age strategies that work with community, parents and young people provides the best chance to effect positive change and influence the power and control behaviours that perpetuate family violence and bullying across generations. Awareness must include a better understanding of how to prevent and respond to abuse of older adults in families.

Outcomes: An environment of positive attitudes and behaviours will be fostered in families, schools and community settings. An increased number of individuals, families and communities will be able to recognize family violence and bullying and take appropriate action. Incidents of family violence and bullying will be reduced over the longer term.

Strategies

- 1.1 Administer *Albertans' Perceptions of Family Violence and Bullying* and Bullying Prevention Evaluation public opinion surveys to inform policy planning and service needs (CYS; ED; All)
- 1.2 Develop strategies to ensure Albertans have access to information and resources to prevent and respond to family violence and bullying (All)
- 1.3 Enhance early childhood development and supports for parents and children to prevent family violence and bullying (CYS; ED; H&W)
- 1.4 Continue the engagement of youth in developing strategies and increasing awareness about the prevention of family violence and bullying (CYS; All)
- 1.5 Develop a provincial Elder Abuse Strategy and Framework to enhance services and supports to victims of elder abuse (SCS)
- 1.6 Develop communication strategies to more effectively communicate the Cross-Ministry Action Plan on Family Violence and Bullying to the general public and stakeholders providing supports and services to victims and perpetrators of family violence (CYS; All)

Key Expected Results

- Public opinion and awareness survey results used to monitor public opinion changes in knowledge and attitudes towards family violence.
- Public awareness, attitudes and behaviour changes related to bullying.
- Results of Taking Action on Bullying sites and Roots of Empathy program used to determine effective parent education programs and practices for school programs.
- More effective provincial family violence and bullying prevention and intervention policies and increased leadership capacity of Alberta's youth in developing community-based strategies.
- Increased public awareness of issues and supports available for older adults impacted by family violence.
- Increased public knowledge of government actions taken to address family violence and bullying and services and supports available to Albertans.

KEY ACTION AREA TWO: PROVINCIAL LEADERSHIP

KEY ACTION
AREA TWO

2 Provide provincial leadership in addressing family violence and bullying

What it means

Appropriate legislation, policy and supports are developed to make Alberta a province where all children, families, and individual Albertans can live safely in their communities and live their lives free of violence and abuse.

Outcomes: Effective, coordinated, legislation, policy and organizational response to family violence and bullying.

Strategies

- 2.1 Through the leadership of the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* (PAFVA) Advisory Committee, enhance protection to victims by developing effective policies and practices to support the *Protection Against Family Violence Act* (CYS; JAG)
- 2.2 Maintain and enhance the cross-government coordination and cross-ministry work to implement the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying, and coordinate with other cross-ministry initiatives such as Safe Communities, to address family violence and bullying (CYS; All)
- 2.3 Enhance the work of the Diversity Relations Committee on Family Violence and Bullying to advise on implementation of the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying, particularly as it relates to enhancing supports to Aboriginal and immigrant families and communities (CYS; AR; ED; EI; H&W/Alberta Health Services; JAG; SGPS)
- 2.4 Support existing and new strategies for engaging Alberta's youth in providing advice in provincial policy development in implementing the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying and in building capacity at the community level to address issues (CYS; All)

Key Expected Results

- Enhanced legislative support for a comprehensive and coordinated provincial response and increased knowledge and utilization by front-line responders in providing protection and safety of individuals impacted by family violence through the *Protection Against Family Violence Act*.
- Increased government profile, coordination, and leadership in addressing issues related to family violence and bullying and supporting safe Alberta communities.
- Enhanced leadership of Aboriginal and immigrant communities in development of effective solutions in preventing family violence and bullying.
- Family violence and bullying initiatives and actions appropriately reflect the diversity of Aboriginal and immigrant communities in Alberta.
- Development and implementation of more effective family violence and bullying policies through increased youth engagement and enhanced youth leadership skills at the community level to respond to local issues.

KEY ACTION AREA THREE: COLLABORATIVE, COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSE

KEY ACTION
AREA THREE

3

Support a collaborative, coordinated community response

What it means

In many ways the most important actions must take place at the community level close to where people live. Responses must reflect the unique needs of each and every community and must enable all service agencies to work together at all levels to provide the best possible solutions to the concrete problems individuals and families face. Northern, Aboriginal, immigrant and rural communities must be provided with the resources and supports to build their local capacity for leadership, organizational development and coordinated service delivery to take local action on family violence and bullying at the local level.

Outcomes: Individuals and families have access to services they need in their community.

Communities have plans and strategies to ensure key community resources, including agencies, law enforcement and caseworkers, are available to assist individuals and families.

Strategies

- 3.1 Enhance collaborative and coordinated community-based initiatives, including the Community Incentive Fund Program, to support local action in preventing family violence and bullying (CYS)
- 3.2 Develop and support local working agreement and protocols between service providers to facilitate a collaborative, coordinated community response to family violence and bullying (All)
- 3.3 Develop and implement a provincial family violence and bullying training framework to coordinate training needs for police, victims services, child intervention workers, crown prosecutors, correctional service workers, health care providers, educators, early childhood development workers, women's shelters, community-based agencies and employment and immigrant workers (CYS; ED; H&W; EI; JAG; SGPS)
- 3.4 Enhance cross-sector information sharing training to assist effective information sharing for managers, front-line staff and other key stakeholders responding to family violence and bullying (CYS; ED; All)
- 3.5 Develop strategies to support northern, Aboriginal, immigrant and rural communities to build local capacity for leadership, organizational development and coordinated services (CYS; AR; EI; All)

Key Expected Results

- Enhanced ability for communities to build on current capacity in identifying community solutions and facilitating community action on family violence and bullying.
- Development of effective community engagement strategies for Aboriginal and immigrant communities.
- Increased awareness of effective family violence and bullying responses through expanded training to front-line responders.
- Development of information-sharing tools that address family violence and bullying and cross-sector training of front-line responders (social workers, managers, police), to ensure a coordinated response to family violence and bullying and to protect the safety of children and families.

KEY ACTION AREA FOUR: SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

KEY ACTION
AREA FOUR

4 Improve access to the necessary services and supports

What it means

The initial focus of this goal is on reducing the impact and incidence of family violence and bullying on all family members. Those fleeing family violence situations need to have safe accommodations, transitional supports and access to community-based services and programs. Research clearly indicates that many children, youth and families who have undergone the trauma of being victims or witnesses to family violence, require intervention and access to programs and services to remain safe, stabilize and readjust. Counselling services are needed for perpetrators of family violence as research indicates that without intervention, many untreated perpetrators either return to a violent relationship with the same person or will be violent with others. The question of how to best respond to bullying in communities requires a long-term view. Many initiatives are taking place across Alberta, and new strategies to respond to bullying will build on existing work.

Outcomes: Families impacted by family violence have the resources and services they need to live safely in their own homes and communities. Processes are available to ensure that children can have safe visitations with their parents as appropriate. Reduced negative impact for children and family members who experience family violence. Assessment and, where indicated, counselling is provided for perpetrators of family violence and victims who are mandated for such services by the court. Reduced incidence of family violence and bullying by reducing offending behaviour.

Strategies

- 4.1 Expand implementation of the Provincial Family Violence Program in communities with domestic violence courts (CYS; H&W/Alberta Health Services; JAG; SGPS)
- 4.2 Expand programming and supports to Aboriginal and immigrant families and communities affected by family violence, in support of Alberta's Safe Communities Task Force recommendations (CYS; AR; H&W/Alberta Health Services; ED; EI; JAG; SGPS)
- 4.3 Implement risk assessment and management strategies to assist with effective responses from front-line responders including police, crown, courts and community corrections, child intervention, health, education, and community (CYS; H&W/Alberta Health Services; JAG; SGPS)
- 4.4 Explore options to expand awareness, availability and access to services and supports that provide for victims of family violence and abuse to live safely (CYS; EI; All)
- 4.5 Coordinate among government departments and community agencies to increase access to safe homes and specialized support services for families and women affected by family violence through implementation of the provincial strategy to address homelessness (HUA; CYS; All)
- 4.6 Building on evaluation of the provincial safe visitation initiative, expand the availability and access to safe visitation services and supports (CYS; JAG)
- 4.7 Support Alberta's sexual assault centres in providing specialized services and supports to people who have been victimized by sexual violence within families (CYS; All)

- 4.8 Work with partnering ministries, police services and community partners to support implementation of the Alberta Relationship Threat Assessment and Management Initiative (ARTAMI) to reduce family violence and stalking related injuries and deaths (SGPS; JAG; CYS)

Key Expected Results

- Expanded Provincial Family Violence Program to additional communities with specialized domestic violence courts to support court-ordered offender counselling.
- Development of coordinated treatment plans for the client within the larger scope of a coordinated, collaborative community response to family violence.
- Enhanced supports available to Aboriginal and immigrant families.
- Evidence of increased coordinated community counselling for perpetrators of family violence.
- Enhanced supports in providing comprehensive services to better serve victims of sexual assaults that occur as part of family violence.
- Reduce the number of Albertans who return to abusive partners due to the availability of resources and transitional supports.

KEY ACTION AREA FIVE: ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH IMPROVED OUTCOMES

KEY ACTION
AREA FIVE

5 Ensure clear accountability to improved outcomes for individuals, families and communities impacted by family violence and bullying

What it means

Individuals, families, communities and government all share in the accountability to achieving improved outcomes for individuals, families and communities impacted by family violence and bullying. Planning and decision-making will focus on the best and most current evidence and ensure effective use of all available resources.

Outcomes: Evidenced-based approaches to family violence and bullying will guide effective planning, program design and form policy decisions. All strategies implemented in the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying will include a balance of support to victims and will ensure individuals involved in family violence and bullying behaviours are held accountable for their actions. Strategies undertaken to prevent and respond to family violence and bullying will be measured in improved outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Strategies

- 5.1 Develop a family violence and bullying research agenda, building on provincial family violence and bullying research partnerships; the 2005 World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence; the 2006 International Policy Forum; and the newly established University of Calgary Research Chair in Domestic Violence; to focus on developing and improving programs and services based on effective practices and evidence-based research (CYS; All)
- 5.2 Develop annual cross-ministry reporting mechanisms for government that describes family violence and bullying prevention programs and initiatives and tracks progress and results of the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying (All)
- 5.3 Establish a performance measurement framework for the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying as a way of tracking outcomes and progress over the long-term (CYS; AR; ED; EI; H&W/Alberta Health Services)

Key Expected Results

- Enhanced assessment of the effectiveness of programs and services in addressing root causes of family violence and bullying prevention through establishment of research partnerships, including building on the 2005 World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence and the 2006 International Policy Forum.
- Improved information sharing of effective initiatives and resources to monitor and track progress in reducing family violence and bullying.
- Through annual reporting processes to Albertans, increased public awareness of actions undertaken by government and communities working together to address family violence and bullying.
- Increased ability across government to assess the outcomes achieved in implementing the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying and to report progress to Albertans.

SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Statistics can only provide a partial picture of the impact of family violence and bullying on society. Statistics are useful in helping to identify the scope of this complex societal issue and the magnitude of the economic and individual costs. Statistics also provide opportunities to examine data in greater detail to help inform policy and program development.

- **Between 2001 and 2006, 103,700 immigrants (i.e. 9.3 per cent of new immigrants to Canada) settled in Alberta. This is a 6.9 per cent increase from the previous census in 2001. A higher proportion of recent immigrants live in urban areas.**⁵
- **Alberta had 16% of Canada's Aboriginal population in 2006. Edmonton has the second highest Aboriginal population of all Canadian cities. There are 52,000 Aboriginal people in Edmonton accounting for five percent of the overall population.**⁶

Significance: Alberta's rapid population growth will increase the significance of culturally appropriate specialized approaches to prevent and respond to family violence in Aboriginal and immigrant communities. The fast growth rate and urbanization of the Aboriginal and immigrant populations highlights the need to continue to involve these communities in the policy-making process, and to ensure programs are culturally sensitive and accessible. As well, Alberta's cities will increasingly become hubs for coordinated, collaborative community responses to family violence and bullying for Aboriginal and immigrant groups.

- **Between 1999 and 2004, social services, including counseling, crisis centres, family centres, shelters, victim services, and women and men's centres, were accessed by 47% of female victims and 17% of male victims in Canada. Only 36% of female victims and 17% of male victims reported the abuse to police.**⁷

Significance: Family violence is preventable and requires shared leadership from government, communities, and individuals. Family, friends and community members play a significant role in supporting victims of violence. Public awareness activities are supported with the 24-hour information line, website and print resources; and public education and training for community members. The Community Incentive Fund Program will continue to help local communities to take action.

- **Canadians over the age of 65 years had a self-reported rate of 12 violent incidents per 1,000 between 1999 and 2004. Almost half of violent incidents against seniors (both family and non-family violence) go unreported to police.**⁸

Significance: Low reporting rates among individuals over the age of 65 years can be explained in part by their increased dependence on family and fear of losing support, increased isolation, and increased likelihood of dementia or other chronic diseases.

Public awareness efforts and supports for older adults through the Elder Abuse Strategy and Framework will play a pivotal role in helping family, friends and community members to identify and respond to older victims of violence.

- **In 2006-2007, 6,245 women and 5,150 children were served in Alberta women’s shelters.**⁹

Significance: The numbers of abused women and their children seeking emergency shelter services and family members who are accessing support to address sexual violence has continued to increase and sustained resources will be needed in these programs; along with community-based strategies to effectively maintain or transition victims of violence and their children safely into their homes, schools, workplaces and communities.

- **Increased cost to social, health, and criminal justice costs for violence against women in Canada is estimated at over \$4 billion annually.**¹⁰

Significance: Family violence is an issue that impacts multiple systems. A cross-sectoral response is necessary to coordinate policies, programs and services and to remove accessibility barriers.

- **A 2008 survey found that the Albertans surveyed agreed with the following:**¹¹

| | Family Violence | Bullying |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| I have a personal responsibility to reduce this in my community. | 90% | 89% |
| Preventing this should be a priority for my community. | 94% | 91% |
| Preventing this should be a priority for the provincial government. | 90% | 83% |

Significance: This data reinforces that family violence and bullying is everyone’s business. No single entity, whether it is individuals, communities, or government, can solve the problems of family violence and bullying alone.

¹ *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*. Page 18. Commissioned by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministries responsible for the Status of Women. Minister of Industry, 2006. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/85-570-XIE/85-570-XIE2006001.pdf>

² MacLaurin, B., Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., McCormack, M., Pitman, L., Forest, N., et al (2005). *Alberta incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect, AIS-2003: Major Findings*, University of Calgary: Calgary.

³ *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*. Pages 64. Commissioned by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministries responsible for the Status of Women. Minister of Industry, 2006. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/85-570-XIE/85-570-XIE2006001.pdf>

⁴ Alberta Education. Accountability and Reporting. System Improvement Group. *Prevention of Bullying Strategy: Stage 4 Summative Evaluation – Baseline Data*. Edmonton: Alberta Education, 2007.

⁵ Statistics Canada (2008). *Canadian Social Trends: Immigration in Canada: Portrait of the foreign-born population, 2006 Census (Catalogue no. 11-008-X)*. Ministry of Industry: Ottawa.

⁶ Statistics Canada (2008). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis, and First Nations, 2006 Census*. Minister of Industry: Ottawa. Retrieved May 28, 2008 from <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/aboriginal/pdf/97-558-XIE2006001.pdf>.

⁷ *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends 2006*. Pages 55-59. Commissioned by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministries responsible for the Status of Women. Minister of Industry, 2006. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/85-570-XIE/85-570-XIE2006001.pdf>

⁸ *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2006*. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2006. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/85-224-XIE2006000.pdf>

⁹ Alberta Children's Services. Retrieved from the Women's Shelter Information System on July 5, 2007. Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (2007, June 29). Fiscal 2006-2007 statistics. Message posted to Alberta Council of Women's Shelters archived at <http://www.acws.ca/questions/stats.php>

¹⁰ Greaves, L., Hankivsky, O., & Kingston-Riechers, J. (1995). *Selected estimates of the costs of violence against women*. Status of Women Canada, Women's Program: London.

¹¹ Das, S. (2008). *Alberta Children and Youth Services: Albertans' Perceptions of Family Violence and Bullying Survey 2008: Key findings report*. Report prepared by Ipsos Reid Public Affairs for the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence and Bullying, Government of Alberta: Edmonton.