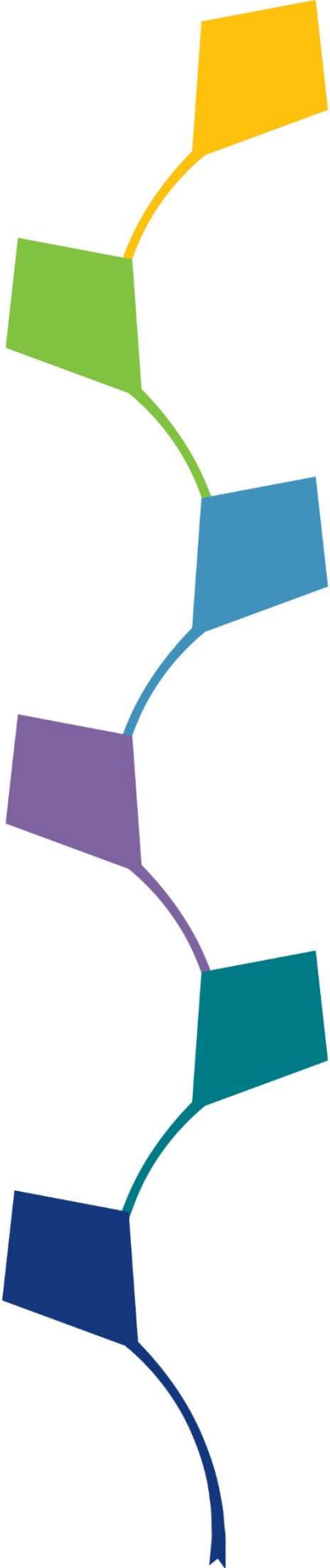




## **Community of Practice Strategy** *Provincial Social Prescribing Initiative*

**May 2023**



**PolicyWise**  
for Children & Families

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## Introduction

### Purpose of this Strategy

The purpose of this Community of Practice (CoP) Strategy is to describe the approach required to support the successful launch, development, and sustainability of the Provincial Social Prescribing Initiative CoP. This strategy includes an overview of the CoP, its memberships, the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, and the structure the CoP will use to learn and improve.

The intended audiences of this strategy are current and future CoP members.

As this is an evolving initiative, this strategy should be reviewed and updated semi-annually. The next review should be scheduled for November, 2023.

## Community of Practice Overview

### Need

In 2021, people aged 55 and older represented about 26 percent of Alberta's population. Over 90 percent of older adults in Alberta live in private households, and the vast majority want to age in place. Often, non-medical issues and an inability to access supports that address social determinants of health (e.g., housing instability, inadequate nutrition, isolation, hoarding, falls), rather than a lack of health services in the community, lead to hospitalization or long-term care placement. There is some evidence in Alberta that the costs of supporting older adults in the community are less than the costs associated with hospitalization and other forms of congregate/institutional care. Coordinated community-based services have been identified as a necessary support in health service delivery transformation planning.

Healthy Aging Alberta (HAA) recently secured a \$3.14 million investment from a private donor to develop a provincial social prescribing model for older adults over the course of a 3-year project. Social prescribing is a holistic, person-centred, and community-based approach to health and wellbeing that bridges the gap between clinical and non-clinical supports and services. By drawing on the central tenets of health promotion and disease prevention, it offers a way to mitigate the impacts of adverse social determinants of health and health inequities by addressing non-medical, health-related social needs. Social prescribing emerged from the realization that 80-90 per cent of people's health depends on adequate food, shelter, education, employment, income, and relationships with others.

Achieving health and well-being for ourselves and others in our communities is complicated. It requires that we know what we want for ourselves and that we have the important connections, support, and resources in place to help us get there. For some people these connections, support, and resources might come from friends and family, and for others it might be from health, social, or community support providers. There are organizations across the province interested in providing supports to seniors through a social prescribing approach. The Alberta Social Prescribing Initiative CoP is an opportunity to build capacity, and to work together toward developing and refining a provincial social prescribing approach. Through the work of the CoP, both the health and seniors serving systems will benefit from improved information flow, referral mechanisms, increased training, and increased capacity of frontline staff to best meet the needs of older adults.

## Purpose

Communities of Practice are groups of professionals who are committed to one another through a shared passion or a common problem, and a common interest in the pursuit of solutions. Members of the CoP will streamline and strengthen their service delivery models, and inform a provincial approach to social prescribing through sharing resources with each other, including tools, experiences, and stories.

The purpose of the Provincial Social Prescribing Initiative CoP is to build a provincial network of social prescribing practitioners participating in social prescribing for older adults. This network will assist in building relationships, sharing ideas, strengthening member capacity, and participating in collective problem solving in pursuit of building a strong approach to social prescribing in their practice. The work of the network will also inform the scale and spread of a social prescribing approach for older adults across Alberta.

## Goals

The goals of the Provincial Social Prescribing Initiative CoP are as follows:

- Create a space for stakeholders from the six regional social prescribing projects that are receiving HAA funding to learn together; and
- Create a space for various external stakeholders and interested parties who are not receiving HAA funding to learn about, and contribute to, the adoption and development of the provincial social prescribing approach.

## Community Participation

### Start Broad

Start broad by inviting people with both involvement and interest in social prescribing. This should include social prescribing practitioners such as Link and Outreach Workers, Program Managers, and other organizational leadership engaged in the delivery of social prescribing supports. In addition, representatives should be invited from interested community partners in both the social services and health systems, including social service providers, primary care networks, and Alberta Health Service.

### Identify Where the Energy Is

Focus initially on identifying where the energy, or excitement is across CoP members. The Community's autonomy will be supported by identifying how members' shared interests and passions emerge over the first year. Opportunities will be provided for breakout groups within CoP meetings to accommodate different stakeholder groups exploring different emerging topic areas. Breakout groups will also be held for Regional Project representatives in support of informing funded project activities, including the development of the provincial social prescribing approach and the implementation of data collection and evaluation activities.

## Refine the Community of Practice Approach

Determine through the process what subcommunities may emerge and need dedicated support. Also consider how to support communication across subcommunities to build a robust learning system.

When considering what subcommunities are emerging, ask the following types of questions:

- Would it be helpful if Link Workers had their own dedicated space and time to learn together?
- Would it be helpful for primary care network representatives to have their own dedicated space and time to learn together?
- Would it be helpful to have focussed meetings to engage external stakeholders who are interested learning about the social prescribing approach and progress?
- Are you able to identify anyone who may lead, or facilitate, an emerging CoP?

## Use Asynchronous Engagement

Use the Healthy Aging CORE Alberta platform (CORE Alberta; [corealberta.ca](https://corealberta.ca)) to engage stakeholders outside of the CoP. This can be helpful in the ongoing onboarding of new CoP members, as well as ensuring that members can catch-up if they miss a meeting. Posting of surveys can help collect information and perspectives from a wider audience, as well the posting of discussion questions and the moderation of the resulting discussion. In this way, online engagement is an opportunity to hear more from CoP members, as well as to hear from people who may feel that participating in a CoP is not for them.

## Community Organization

### Orientation

All new members will receive an orientation to the CoP before they attend their first meeting. The orientation will ensure the new members understand the CoP's purpose and goals, roles and responsibilities, what has been accomplished so far, the current priorities, how meetings are structured, and the dates and topics for a few upcoming meetings. The purpose of the orientation is to ensure new members feel comfortable joining the CoP and are ready to contribute to conversations and activities that are already in some stage of development, implement, and evaluation. An orientation checklist can be found in Appendix 1.

### Schedule

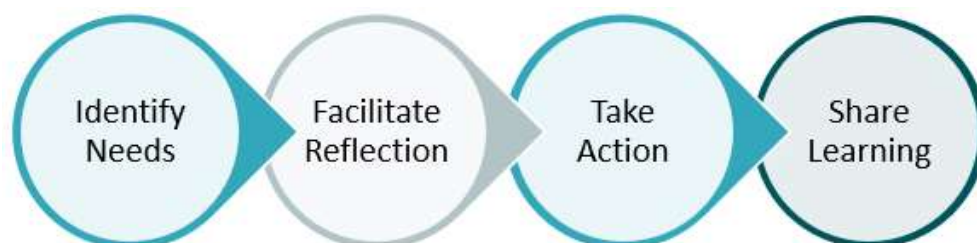
Community of Practice meetings will be held monthly. Agendas and any pre-work will be sent out at least one week in advance.

## Roles and Responsibilities

| Community Role       | Community Responsibility                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Network Coordinators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for attending the CoP meetings</li> <li>Responsible for engaging the social prescribing practitioners from their region, including: extending invitations to participate; facilitating CoP regional breakout groups; and soliciting and sharing feedback on CoP implementation</li> <li>Responsible for high-level program policies or program decisions</li> <li>Responsible for addressing system-level barriers faced by the CoP members</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| CoP Facilitators     | <p>Healthy Aging Alberta - Beth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-Facilitator of the CoP</li> <li>Focus on orientation to HAA, developing the provincial social prescribing approach, and connecting the CoP activities to local and provincial governance decision-making and action</li> <li>Responsible for partnership development and CoP invitations</li> <li>Responsible for creating and managing infrastructure to support CoP development (e.g., meeting scheduling and hosting, CORE Alberta platform development and management)</li> <li>Participation in all CoP meetings</li> </ul> <p>PolicyWise for Children &amp; Families - Eric</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-Facilitator of the CoP</li> <li>Focus on implementation of developmental evaluation practices – gathering and synthesizing information, reflecting on learnings, informing decision-making on: a) Regional Project service-delivery improvements; and b) provincial approach and governance</li> <li>Responsible for summarizing developmental evaluation learnings</li> <li>Responsible for ongoing refinement of service-level data collection in support of outcomes evaluation</li> <li>Participation in quarterly CoP meetings around evaluation and data collection topics</li> </ul> |
| Community Members    | <p>Community members include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link and Outreach Workers, Program Managers, and other organizational leadership engaged in the delivery of social prescribing supports</li> <li>Representatives from interested community partners in both the social services and health systems, including social service providers, primary care networks, and Alberta Health Service</li> </ul> <p>Their responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for coming to meetings excited and ready to engage</li> <li>Responsible for demonstrating respect for each other inside and outside of meetings</li> <li>Responsible for completing mutually agreed upon pre-work</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## Community Learning System

A learning system provides structure to the process of maintaining or improving organizational performance based on experience. It also ensures that learnings are captured and shared to maximize the impact of the CoP's work on the programs and systems it aims to influence. A general approach that is supportive of managing program or organization performance within a CoP is provided in the figure below. This approach begins with identifying the needs and interests (i.e., "energy") of the CoP members, facilitating collaborative reflection, planning and taking action, and sharing learnings with a broader audience.



### Identify Needs

Within the Provincial Social Prescribing Initiative there are three main areas of member needs: regional project improvement; provincial social prescribing approach development; and CoP support. Regional Projects will be interested in engaging each other in learning from their respective successes and challenges, the learnings from the Regional Projects will inform the development of a provincial approach, and the members will want the CoP to function in a way that best supports them in their pursuit of solutions to the challenges they are facing.

***Host conversations that surface the successes and challenges members are facing. Work with members to prioritize and re-prioritize addressing the needs and interests of the group through a collaborative decision-making processes as they emerge.***

### Facilitate Reflection & Take Action

Once the needs and interests of the CoP members are identified, it is time for reflecting and acting. The table below describes a reflective model that can help groups reflect on shared experiences, building understanding, and move the group toward coordinated action.

|           | What?                                                                                                                                                                                      | So What?                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Now What?                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Purpose   | Describe what happened                                                                                                                                                                     | Makes sense of the implications                                                                                                                                                                                     | Define a course of action                                                                                                                                                               |
| Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What happened?</li><li>What did you notice?</li><li>What worked well and what didn't?</li><li>What related data or information do we have?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What caused this to happen?</li><li>What effect does this have on our team, our clients, and our partners?</li><li>Is this part of a broader pattern we are seeing?</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What should we do differently to improve our program?</li><li>How might we test out our understanding and the improvement we will make?</li></ul> |

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What insights might be drawn from this experience?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will we know if the change is an improvement?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Example | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I received a referral and when I called the client they told me they didn't want support</li> <li>The client told me they didn't really understand what the referral was for when they received it</li> <li>When I looked at our referral data, I noticed that half of our referrals are declined</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It seems that the client didn't have enough information to know if they wanted a referral</li> <li>One of the other Regional Projects are also experiencing this</li> <li>The other Regional Project is not experiencing this, and they provide more service information on their referral form</li> <li>This impacts our team as we are spending a lot of time following up on the unsuccessful referrals</li> <li>The client may not get the actual support services they need in a timely manner</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We should strengthen the description of our program and the types of services we provide on the referral form.</li> <li>We should closely monitor the successful referral rates to see if they are improving after we make the change</li> <li>The Regional Projects should consider building a standardized referral form the builds on the strengths of each Project's approach</li> </ul> |

Action might include, among other things:

- Continuing to observe the situation to gain more experience
- Collecting more or new information to better understand the situation
- Conducting an environmental scan to better understand the challenge and potential solutions
- Making changes to how the program functions or services are delivered
- Advocating for additional community supports where gaps exist
- Pursuing training and other capacity building opportunities for different stakeholder groups

***Host conversations that allow the Community of Practice members to reflect together on the success they achieve and the challenges they face. Be purposeful in seeing the conversation through to identifying tangible action people can take based on what is being learned. Check-in on progress on resolving the challenge as action is taken, as members gain more experience, and as more information is gathered.***

## Share Learnings

With social prescribing being a new and developing approach in Alberta there is much interest from a wide variety of partners in understanding the approach better and learning how they can get involved. Considering this it is important for the knowledge generated in the CoP to move beyond just its members. The learnings of the CoP must be captured and shared in a way that it can be easily accessed and consumed by a wider audience.

Deliverables developed through the CoP activities that could support a social prescribing communication plan include:

- Community of Practice Meeting Summaries (a template can be found in Appendix 2)
- Quarterly Community of Practice Learning Briefs (a template can be found in Appendix 3)
- Social Prescribing Program Improvement Stories<sup>1</sup>
- Social Prescribing Client, Staff, and Carer Stories<sup>2</sup>

***Capture and share learnings in multiple formats and in many ways. Consider who needs to learn from the CoP activities and the best ways to communicate with them. The Community of Practice Meeting Summaries and Quarterly Community of Practice Learning Briefs will be helpful for partners who are engaged in social prescribing activities. The Social Prescribing Improvement Stories and Social Prescribing Client, Staff, and Carer Stories can be helpful for communicating with all audiences.***

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<sup>1</sup> Consult this resource: <https://rb.gy/xj1gk>

<sup>2</sup> Consult these resources: <https://rb.gy/nykbr> & <https://rb.gy/ehcdn>

## APPENDIX 1 – New Member Orientation Checklist

### PROVINCIAL SOCIAL PRESCRIBING MODEL

#### Community of Practice New Member Orientation Checklist

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#### Purpose

The purpose of the orientation is to ensure new members feel comfortable joining the CoP and are ready to contribute to conversations and activities that are already in some stage of development, implementation, and evaluation.

#### Checklist

##### ☐ Introduction Email

- ☐ Include a welcoming message
- ☐ Include an introduction to the Health CORE Alberta knowledge hub
- ☐ Include links to the following information on Alberta CORE:
  - ☐ CoP Meeting Summaries
  - ☐ CoP Quarterly Learning Summaries
  - ☐ Video recordings of any CoP activities and trainings
- ☐ Include an invitation to an orientation meeting with the HAA CoP Co-Facilitator

##### ☐ Meeting with the HAA CoP Co-Facilitator

- ☐ Provide a verbal overview of where the CoP is at in its development
- ☐ Provide an overview of the current membership
- ☐ Provide an overview of the upcoming CoP activities, including:
  - ☐ Region Project service improvement activities
  - ☐ Provincial Model development activities
  - ☐ Training and other capacity building activities
  - ☐ Evaluation development, implementation, and analysis activities
- ☐ Provide an overview of the CoP Learning System
- ☐ Answer any questions the new CoP member may have

## APPENDIX 2 – Meeting Summary Template

### PROVINCIAL SOCIAL PRESCRIBING MODEL

#### Community of Practice Meeting Summary

Month, YEAR

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| Session Information |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Session Title       |  |
| Date                |  |
| Time                |  |
| Facilitator(s)      |  |
| Attendees (#)       |  |

| Agenda   |       |            |
|----------|-------|------------|
| Activity | Goals | Next Steps |
|          |       |            |
|          |       |            |
|          |       |            |

| Discussion Log |                   |       |          |           |
|----------------|-------------------|-------|----------|-----------|
| Speaker        | Topic Description | What? | So What? | Now What? |
|                |                   |       |          |           |
|                |                   |       |          |           |

## APPENDIX 3 – Quarterly Learning Brief Template

### PROVINCIAL SOCIAL PRESCRIBING MODEL

Community of Practice Quarterly Learning Brief

Month – Month, YEAR

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#### Purpose

This document provides rapid learning highlights for MONTH DAY – MONTH DAY, YEAR. It also outlines considerations for Health Aging Alberta, the Social Prescribing Regional Project, and interested stakeholders going forward in the development and implementation of social prescribing services in Alberta.

#### Key Activities

Insert description here

#### Learning Highlights

##### 1) Topic 1

Insert description here

##### CONSIDERATIONS

Insert key considerations here

##### 2) Topic 2

Insert description here

##### CONSIDERATIONS

Insert key considerations here

##### 3) Topic 3

Insert Description Here

##### CONSIDERATIONS

Insert key considerations here