

## **ASSOCIATED NEEDS AND RELATED CONCERNS**

The following are some associated needs and concerns, identified by CMHA, impacting upon the delivery of mental health services to people in Alberta:

1. There is a critical need for more low-income and supported housing.
2. Inadequate funding exists for community agencies to maintain staffing in Alberta, partially due to the nature of contracts from health districts and other quasi-government providers of healthcare services. Consequently, employees needed for program support are lost.
3. Overall sustainability of not-for-profit organizations in today's environment is a major concern. Increased costs and demands exceed potential for increased revenue thereby creating difficulty in ensuring development and delivery of quality programs.
4. More Mobile Crisis Teams (of police and mental health workers) are needed on the streets to help mental health clients from filling the jails and emergency wards.
5. More resources are needed to increase mental health education (overall and in various sectors of society – seniors, aboriginal, children, workplace, immigrants, etc.) and reduce mental health stigma.
6. More investment is required for clinical and community research in mental health.
7. Improved employment programs for people living with mental illness would increase self-worth and improve standards of living. AISH is becoming more flexible but must continue to move forward to provide base of income support.
8. Alberta Health coverage for psychologists would improve equity of access to that source of professional help.
9. More equitable access is needed to the best drugs for mental illness with the least side effects. This is critical for CTO support but also for many other mental health patients, who don't qualify for private medical plans and have to accept drugs with more severe side effects than others now available. For instance, only Alberta and Manitoba do not currently include Risperdal Consta on their Drug Benefit List.
10. Increased interdepartmental planning (e.g. economic development, health, housing, seniors, employment, justice, etc.), as many areas impact mental health, just as mental health has a great impact on our lives overall.