

More supports for pregnant, at-risk moms and babies

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A program that helps at-risk pregnant women in downtown Edmonton is improving the health of mothers and infants and is paving the way for a healthier Alberta.



A support worker at HER Pregnancy Program in downtown Edmonton works with one of the children who receive support.

The Alberta government is committing \$1.4 million over the next three years to support the Healthy, Empowered and Resilient Pregnancy Program – known as the HER program – where at-risk moms can take steps to improve their health and provide a healthy start for their babies.

The program supports women throughout their pregnancy and connects them to local health agencies like the Boyle McCauley Health Centre and the East Edmonton Perinatal Clinic for prenatal care.

“We need to give mothers and their babies the support they need to thrive. Improving the health of mothers and infants improves the long-term health for all Albertans. This collaborative approach to primary care is significantly improving health outcomes for mothers and their children.”

Fred Horne, Minister of Health

The program has achieved many positive results since opening its doors in April 2011 with prior funding from Alberta Justice and Solicitor General. A recent independent evaluation of the program shows the following outcomes over an 18-month period:

- 222 women were supported during this time period, with 59 women giving birth;
- on average, women used the program about 83 times from their first trimester to six months post-birth; and,
- 52 per cent of the moms maintained custody of their infants and are successfully parenting.

“This has been a highly successful program. We’re extremely gratified that the provincial government has recognized this success and confirmed that the program’s funding will continue. This decision will be of ongoing benefit to many street-involved women and save dollars in the departments of Health, Human Services, and income support. It is critical that people are treated sensitively, respectfully, and compassionately, regardless of their circumstances. Supporting women rather than vilifying or punishing them, leads to healthier moms and healthier children, as well as brighter futures.”

Marliss Taylor, Streetworks Program Manager

“This program is absolutely amazing. When I came here it gave me hope. I didn’t know there were so many people who cared. It was good to know that total strangers accepted me, were here to help, and that I had a safe place to cry. The support workers were here for me no matter how busy they were.”

Jesse Jackson, former HER program client, and current Youth Mentor with Streetworks’ Youth-to-Youth Drug Education Project

Street-involved women face many risks and challenges. Pregnancy compounds these challenges. Homelessness, addiction and mental health issues, and barriers to health care access can prevent some women from optimizing their health and that of their infants. The HER Pregnancy Program improves maternal and newborn health outcomes for street-involved women by enhancing their skills, knowledge, resources, and support to help them to live safer, healthier lives.

Under the [Building Alberta Plan](#), our government is investing in families and communities, living within our means, and opening new markets for Alberta's resources to ensure we're able to fund the services Albertans told us matter most to them. We will continue to deliver the responsible change Albertans voted for.

Media inquiries

Matthew Grant

780-222-6433
Press Secretary, Health

Marliss Taylor

780-423-3122 ext. 210 or 211
Program Manager, Streetworks