

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA), in partnership with the Government of Saskatchewan, is increasing access to addiction supports in the province. Virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) is a Saskatchewan Health Authority program providing timely, seamless and virtual access to an addiction medicine team for residents across Saskatchewan.

Virtual Access to Addiction Medicine (VAAM) will provide life-saving medications, treatment, support and resources to help reduce substance use and dependency, prevent overdoses, save lives and live in recovery. This new program is planned for Saskatchewan communities that do not have access to a local clinic or an addiction medicine prescriber in their community.

Who is eligible for the Virtual Access to Addiction Medicine (VAAM) program?

- Individuals 18 years and older currently living in Saskatchewan. (Physicians may use their judgement to decide if they wish to offer services to mature minors.)
- Individuals interested in addressing their substance use including opioids, stimulants, alcohol, and benzodiazepines.
- Individuals open to discussion about substance use disorder medication.
- Individuals with no current prescriber (The VAAM team may also provide a prescription between care settings.) Individuals will be connected to a local prescriber, if available.

There is no fee to access the Virtual Access to Addiction Medicine (VAAM) program, but the cost of medications will depend on each individual's health coverage.

Clients may engage at any point including new starts, emergency transitions between care settings, transfers from another clinic, or restarts.

What services are available through the Virtual Access to Addiction Medicine (VAAM) program?

Virtual Access to Addiction Medicine (VAAM) focuses on a holistic model of care and includes:

- Diagnosis of substance use disorders
- Assessment of overlapping mental health disorders
- Using medication to manage cravings and withdrawal when required
- Providing care and support for mild to moderate safe alcohol withdrawal symptoms when possible
- Routine screening for sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBIs) and manage or refer as appropriate
- Short-term counselling, trauma-informed and culturally safe care
- Managing and making referrals for health-care needs and connecting them with primary health care providers whenever possible
- Using medication to manage mood and anxiety disorders or for mild drug-related psychosis from using stimulants
- Providing connections to appropriate community services and supports



What medications are prescribed through the virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) program?

Addiction medications approved by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan for virtual prescribing will be provided. This may include medications to treat individuals living with opioid use disorder, alcohol use disorder or stimulant use disorder.

Who are the virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) program team members?

The initial clinical team will include physicians, registered nurses (RNs), registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs), and addiction counsellors.

How can I get connected to the virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) program?

Individuals can call the VAAM program directly to connect with supports. No medical referral is necessary.

When will the virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) program start accepting clients?

The program will start in January 2026. Phase one of the VAAM program will offer services in select communities, which have been identified as having limited access to addiction care. Contact the clinic for more information.

Is there anything I can do to support someone to connect with the virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) program?

The virtual access for addiction treatment (VAAM) program provides support to clients online. To receive the best care and service, you can help by ensuring clients have:

- A safe, quiet and private place to contact the virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) program in confidence;
- Access to a phone, tablet or computer with video, if available; and,
- A way for the virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) program team to contact the client if their call gets dropped.

Does the virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) program provide long-term support for clients?

If no local health-care prescribers or providers are available, virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) services may be provided on a long-term basis.

The team will be unable to manage chronic pain, complicated or severe substance use withdrawal and psychiatric illness.

For more information or to connect to the virtual access to addiction medicine (VAAM) program call
1-844-449-8226 (VAAM)

