



*Office of the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addiction  
MLA, Calgary - Foothills*

November 25, 2020

To those concerned,

COVID-19 has been and continues to be challenging for Albertans living with mental health and addiction. Thankfully, Alberta is home to a vibrant and expansive mental health and addiction recovery community. Many people who are in recovery often access mutual support groups to begin and maintain their recovery. Given the current public health measures that are in place, I understand that there has been uncertainty about whether or not the operation of mutual support groups can continue.

The Government of Alberta considers mutual support groups an essential service to preserve life, health, and public safety. This includes groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, SMART Recovery, etc. Mutual support meetings are permitted to continue in person without capacity restrictions while strictly adhering to measures to control the spread of COVID-19. This includes 2 meters of physical distancing between individuals, continuous masking where applicable, and sanitization procedures.

Enhanced public health measures, effective November 24, 2020, do not place any additional restrictions on mutual support groups. For more information about permitted activities including mutual support groups visit [www.alberta.ca/restrictions-on-gatherings.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/restrictions-on-gatherings.aspx).

I strongly encourage organizations that host mutual support groups to continue providing meeting space while groups take the required steps to operate safely. These mutual support groups are essential to providing the needed connection and peer support the recovery community relies on.

Sincerely,

Jason Luan  
Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions