



**NOURISH
ANCHOR COHORT**

**2021 -
2023**

SETTING THE STAGE AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL

Saskatchewan Anchor Team Impact Report



**Saskatchewan Health Authority
Promotes Food Security and
Food Sovereignty in Partnership
with Communities**

Published Summer 2023

SASKATCHEWAN ANCHOR TEAM

The Saskatchewan Anchor Team's work is situated within the context of the Nourish Anchor Cohort, a two-year national innovation program that ran from 2021 - 2023. The goal of the Anchor Cohort was to support health systems across Canada to develop anchor leadership, signalling their commitment to harness the long-term presence, mission, and resources of health care institutions to anchor wellbeing in their communities through food. The Cohort brought together seven multidisciplinary place-based teams to work on 'portfolios of systems interventions' that activated community assets and explored innovative food for health solutions. The accomplishments outlined in this report reflect their efforts to nudge local and regional health systems toward meaningful transformation in order to promote better health for people and the planet.

Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) includes 63 hospitals that serve approximately 1.17 million residents throughout the province. SHA is the largest employer in Saskatchewan. In cooperation with the CHEP Good Food, a Saskatoon-based non-profit organization promoting food security, and University of Saskatchewan - the team agreed to act on growing concerns about community food insecurity and a lack of food sovereignty from urban settings to Northern and remote areas among First Nations and Métis communities.

The three partners worked with a broader network of stakeholders to collectively understand the historical roots of food insecurity and food sovereignty, and co-design a trajectory to a more sustainable future, one which recognizes that "food is medicine - the medicine essential to nourish and heal people, communities and planet." At the same time, the team is aware that "the large scale food procurement needs of the health authority have the potential to overwhelm local sustainable practices (hunting, growing, harvesting) if not done in a scaled, responsible fashion. We must be mindful that our designs for the future consider both ecological and human needs, and be aware of our power in shaping the economic and sustainability processes in our province."



Saskatchewan Anchor Team members gather for a traditional cooking workshop in Thunder Bay. Summer 2022.

TACKLING WICKED PROBLEMS THROUGH FOOD FOR HEALTH LEVERS

Each team in the Anchor Cohort named a 'Wicked Problem' that they looked to address during their time in the Cohort. Wicked problems were identified through a process of problem space mapping, stakeholder engagement, and surfacing the historical roots of how problems came to be.

Saskatchewan's Anchor Team's Wicked Problem

The status quo prioritizes and upholds settler colonial food systems and capitalism, leading to inequitable health outcomes, environmental negligence, and ongoing exclusion of Indigenous world views.

The Saskatchewan Anchor Team identified 13 priority Food for Health Levers to action in their work. The Food for Health Levers were developed by Nourish to frame powerful ways of impacting climate, equity, and community wellbeing through food in health care. These leverage points help us make connections between our food, health, social, and ecological systems and reach their greatest potential when working in concert.



INNOVATION IN ACTION

During the Anchor Cohort, the team employed a collaborative, experimental approach to developing and testing smaller scale ideas at the program and policy level in eight key areas:

1. Trialing food prescriptions within the health care system (Apple-a-Day Program)
2. Incorporating values-based decision-making into health care procurement
3. Increasing locally-procured foods in the SHA
4. Increasing offerings of Indigenous foods in SHA
5. Developing a regional production map to understand in-province suppliers
6. Implementing a composting pilot
7. Building connection of Nutrition and Food Services staff to food through targeted weekly huddle messages
8. Establishing the feasibility of a green roof project for on-site growing on a SHA-owned building



Members of the Saskatchewan Anchor Team put heads (and big smiles) together as they strategize about next steps for their portfolio of projects. Teams gained insights and feedback from one another at the first in-person cross-Cohort gathering in Montréal. Summer 2022.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

The Saskatchewan Anchor Team established a diverse portfolio of **10 mutually reinforcing interventions** that emerged from **29 initial ideas** identified during the planning phase. These include:

One innovative program and policy that has been tested and is now in the process of scaling:

- **A food strategy to add more plant-based foods and Indigenous menu items** was piloted in two Northern Saskatchewan sites and adopted across SHA.

Three innovative programs and policies that are currently in the testing phase:

- The **Apple-A-Day pilot** in three different sites to test the impact of food prescriptions on food security and nutrition indicators, including fresh produce bags partially procured from local producers.
- A **Compositing in Health Care pilot** to divert green waste from the landfill that has the potential to be adopted by other SHA sites.
- The establishment of a **SHA Procurement Policy & RFP Test for values-based procurement**, including local production and sustainability criteria, with a first test on procuring bread for the SHA.

One creative model to integrate sustainability, local food, and Indigenous-oriented menus currently in the design phase:

- A proposal to complete a study on the feasibility of creating a RoofTop Garden atop a major SHA health facility.



300,000 lbs of compost collected!

OUTCOMES & IMPACT



*Complete evaluation data for the Apple-a-Day food prescribing pilot project, including impacts on food insecurity and nutrition, are expected late 2023/early 2024.

LOOKING FORWARD

SHA's work on food prescriptions is poised to shift beliefs about the role of food within health care by acknowledging the possibilities for food to be treated (and prescribed) as medicine. Moreover, SHA's determination to source locally, providing food that is good for the patient and the local economy, also signifies a shift in beliefs about the anchor role health care institutions can play in building values-based economic stability in Saskatchewan communities. Many of the projects outlined in this vignette will continue past the end of the Cohort. Evaluation data will be reviewed to make decisions about how to adjust and/or possibly scale successful initiatives.



The team gathers for their land-based learning event in Northern Saskatchewan. Summer 2021.

Want to learn more? Reach out to the Saskatchewan Anchor Team about their work, or contact [Nourish](#) if you're inspired to lead change in your own community.

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SASKATCHEWAN ANCHOR TEAM SNAPSHOT

Saskatchewan Health Authority

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is the largest organization in Saskatchewan, employing more than 40,000 employees and physicians. It is responsible for the delivery of safe, high quality health care for the entire province.

Participating Sites:

- Regina
- Saskatoon
- Meadow Lake
- North Battleford
- La Ronge

CHEP Good Food Inc.

CHEP good food is a non-profit community organization that promotes and provides healthy food options to Saskatoon residents. Their mission is to work with children, families and communities to improve access to good food and promote food security.

Other Organizations Involved:

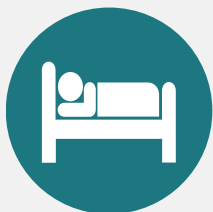
University of Saskatchewan



SHA served over 9.38 million meals in 2022-2023



Food budget ~ \$30 million/year



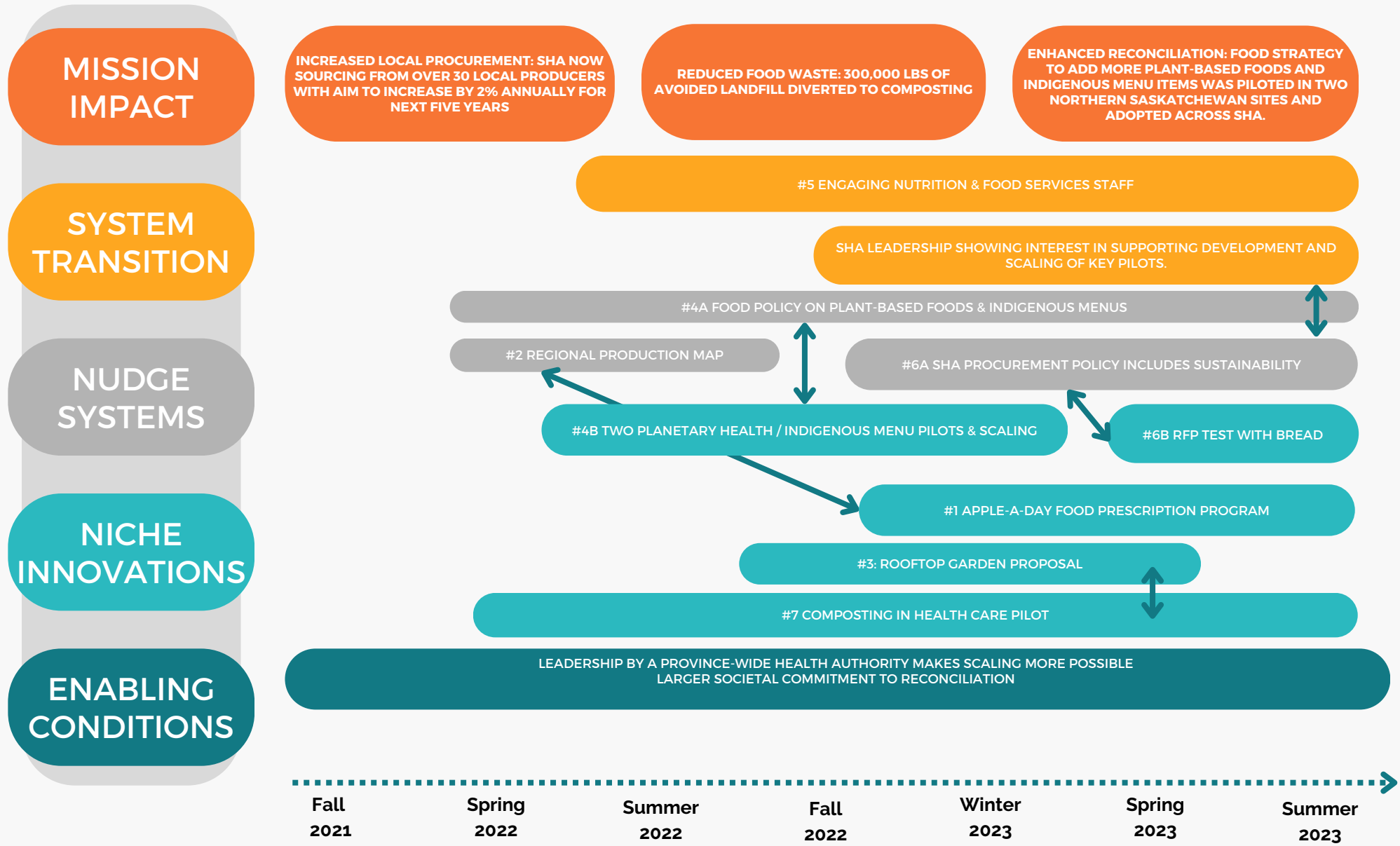
SHA includes:

- 2,833 acute care beds across 63 facilities; and
- 9,000 long-term care beds across 156 homes



- SHA serves the entire province of Saskatchewan with a population of 1.2 million
- CHEP serves the City of Saskatoon with a population of 284,622

DETAILED INTERVENTIONS & OUTCOMES



Reference Number & Date	Title	Key Outcomes	Significance	Contributions
1. Fall 2022 - Fall 2023	Apple-a-Day Food Prescription Program	Established a one-year pilot of a food prescription program in three distinct communities (Regina, North Battleford, and La Ronge) using fresh fruits and vegetables, some procured from local producers. At six-months into the program 100% of participants said the program has been beneficial for them and 86% of participants said their intake of fruits and vegetables increased. <i>*Complete evaluation data for the Apple-a-Day food prescribing pilot project, including impacts on food insecurity and nutrition, are expected late 2023/early 2024.</i>	Increased uptake of locally grown fresh food, strengthened relationships with local producers, and generated rich learnings on the potential of the approach/innovation.	The Saskatchewan Anchor Team was active in conceiving of the idea, as well as developing, implementing, and evaluating it.
2. Spring 2022 - Winter 2023	Regional Production Map	Identified, documented, and distributed a map of local growers and their produce to support SHA procurement of local foods.	Increased awareness of the value of locally-grown foods to make them more accessible.	The Saskatchewan Anchor Team led development and implementation.
3. Fall 2022 - March 2023	Rooftop Garden Proposal	Engaged with SHA senior leadership and an Energy and Sustainability Specialist to develop a vision, concept, pre-feasibility study, and proposal to explore the viability of a rooftop garden atop a major SHA facility that would supply fresh produce and herbs for food services.	Illustrated an ability to develop and pursue novel and ambitious ideas within the larger SHA. The idea offers a high profile example of innovation in approaching food within SHA.	The Saskatchewan Anchor Team developed the idea and engaged SHA and the Energy and Sustainability Specialist to develop a proposal.
4a & 4b. Spring 2021 - Summer 2023	Food Policy on Plant-Based Foods & Indigenous	Created a local foods policy and related work standards for SHA focused on plant-based foods and Indigenous menus. Included two pilots in northern	Pilots demonstrated the desirability, feasibility, and effectiveness of locally produced, plant-based, Indigenous-oriented menus and	The Saskatchewan Anchor Team developed food policy and work standards and

	Menus	Saskatchewan and urban sites. Practices were adopted by 6 SHA sites in Saskatoon.	procurement, with a policy framework making scaling of the model easier.	coordinated with local teams to develop and implement pilots.
5. Summer 2022 - Ongoing	Engaging Nutrition & Food Services Staff	Distributed weekly messages on a variety of food-related topics to SHA Nutrition & Food Services staff with the aim to increase awareness about the role of local and Indigenous food in health and wellbeing.	Expanded the breadth of engagement in the challenge of employing food as a way to increase health, Reconciliation, and local procurement.	The Saskatchewan Anchor Team brainstormed and developed content and key messages for weekly distribution.
6a & 6b. Winter - Summer 2023	SHA Procurement Policy & RFP Test	Developed a SHA Nutrition & Food Services Procurement Policy focused on values-based procurement, with the initial test of policy involving a Request for Proposals (RFP) for procuring bread, with 20% of criteria focused on sustainability.	The creation of the policy demonstrates a system-wide commitment to the issue of sustainability, while the pilot allows for a test of the interest of local producers, and creates the foundation for expanding the values-based RFP to other foods.	The Saskatchewan Anchor Team researched, developed, and wrote the policy, including navigating complex legal and trade requirements.
7. Spring 2022 - Summer 2023	Composting in Health Care Pilot	Designed and implemented a pilot to compost in a SHA site in cooperation with other SHA groups. An estimated 300,000 lbs green waste was diverted from landfill.	SHA leadership has expressed an interest to expand the model to other sites, which represents another building block on using food to encourage more sustainable practices in SHA.	The Saskatchewan Anchor Team developed and promoted the idea and were involved in designing the pilot as well as its evaluation and promotion of findings.



NOURISH

Nourish believes food is a powerful way to build health for both people and the planet, in addition to providing comfort and healing to patients, creating more resilient communities, and addressing climate change.

Starting from a community of practice, we have grown to a network of leaders, organizations, and communities, shifting the focus upstream to work preventatively through food in health care.

Through our work with cohorts of leaders and action learning programs, we equip innovative individuals and teams with the skills and momentum to empower bold leadership in climate action and health equity. We work across community, institutional, and policy scales to steward food for health innovation.

Join us!

NourishLeadership.ca