



City Mayors' Caucus

November 16, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan Makes Strides, Continued Collaboration Necessary

The City Mayors' Caucus and Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) acknowledge the recent strides the province has taken in adopting a new action plan for mental health and addictions, which includes a homelessness strategy and other additional investments in mental health and addictions. Among other items, we are pleased with the 500 new addiction treatment spaces over the next five years and the 200 treatment beds by the end of the fiscal year. We appreciate the investment of \$40.2 million for 155 new supportive housing spaces, \$14.1 million for 120 new emergency shelter spaces, and the new permanent emergency shelter spaces for Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and other communities. These represent solid, essential steps in the ongoing battle to address mental health and addictions in our province.

The CMC recognizes that there is a great deal more to do, as evidenced by the recent shooting in Estevan. Proactive mental health supports, continued focus on housing, and systems that ensure that basic living requirements are adequately addressed for everyone in the province are essential.

"Municipalities across Saskatchewan are seeing the reverberating effects of mental health and addictions, and those issues link inextricably to homelessness," says Gerald Aalbers, SUMA's Vice-President of Cities. "Housing insecurities worsen mental health and addiction issues, and mental health and addiction issues exacerbate problems for individuals experiencing homelessness. We have much to do if we are to find a sustainable solution to this vast mental health and addictions crisis. Organizations and government bodies will need to keep collaborating because this issue affects us all. It's happening in our own backyards, and delays in dealing with it cost us all more in the long run."

SUMA and the CMC look forward to continued dialogue and collaboration for further improvements in our province. Funds provided under the Saskatchewan Income Support program and Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program will fail to meet basic costs of living, creating and exacerbating poverty, and many of the processes need ongoing reform. While the 155 new supportive housing spaces are positive, that number fails to match the City of Regina's needs alone, much less the rest of the province.

For more information visit www.suma.org, or to arrange an interview please contact:

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We acknowledge the Government's steps in creating action plans for mental health and addictions, and for homelessness, and we thank them for their efforts. We look forward to continued partnership and collaboration in the future, to ensure our province addresses these critical issues for the benefit of all Saskatchewan's hometowns, their residents, and the systems upon which we all depend.

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