



Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
Unit 305 4741 Parliament Avenue
Regina, SK S4W 0T9
306-525-3727

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Investments in Health Important to Saskatchewan's Hometowns,
But More Funding Needed**

Investments in health announced today in the 2022-23 provincial budget are important to Saskatchewan's hometowns, but more funding to address access to health and mental health and addictions services in the province is needed.

"Access to healthcare, from emergency medical transport to mental health and addictions support, is pivotal to ensuring the quality of lives of the residents in Saskatchewan's hometowns," said Mayor Mike Strachan, SUMA's Vice-President of Villages, Resort Villages, and Northern Municipalities. "While we are very appreciative of increased investments in the health of our residents, more support is needed."

SUMA was pleased to see a \$10.8 million investment in EMS, in 27 communities, as well as a focus on recruiting additional healthcare professionals for Saskatchewan's hometowns. The addition of 150 addictions treatment spaces over the next three years, initially announced in the 2021 Speech from the Throne, is also appreciated.

"Mental health and addictions issues were at critical levels in our communities, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further compounded that," said Mayor Strachan. "We welcome the investments announced by the province, including additional treatment beds, but we need to ensure there is continued investment in mental health and addictions early-intervention and care. We would also like to see a long-term strategy to address mental health and addictions in the province, with firm timelines for implementation."

SUMA welcomes the continued investment in Saskatchewan's hometowns through Municipal Revenue Sharing, but was disappointed with the reduction in funding. Municipal Revenue Sharing for the 2022-23 year is set to be approximately \$262 million, a reduction from the 2021-22 budget.

"While our municipalities appreciate the funding provided through Municipal Revenue Sharing, it is disappointing that the level of funding is decreasing as the province anticipates increased revenues," said Mayor Strachan. "We anticipated the decrease but had asked for the province to freeze funding levels as municipalities continue to deal with the costs of COVID-19, inflation, and Provincial Sales Tax on our infrastructure and services."

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

Sean McKenzie
Director of Advocacy Services
SUMA
Telephone: 306-525-4388
advocacydir@suma.org

Founded in 1905, SUMA is the voice of Saskatchewan's hometowns.