



Government
— of —
Saskatchewan

Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors
and Rural and Remote Health

Legislative Building
Regina, Canada S4S 0B3

JUL 19 2023

Our File: 23-827

Jyotsna (Jo) Custead
Chair
Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners
(board@saskatoonpolicecommission.com)

Dear Jyotsna:

Thank you for your June 8, 2023, letter about the 2022 Annual Report of the Street Activity Subcommittee and Community Support Program. We appreciate you taking the time to share the concerns of the Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners.

The health and well-being of Saskatchewan residents is our priority. We are committed to providing quality health and social support services.

Our government recognizes the impact mental health disorders, overdoses, and other substance-related harms have on individuals, their families, and communities. We are committed to finding solutions to address these complex issues with our partners.

Addressing addictions, mental health, and homelessness is complex. It often takes the efforts of several government ministries, organizations, and service providers working together to ensure individuals receive services where and when they need them.

We support people experiencing homelessness by connecting them to shelter and income supports. This support includes referrals to government and community organizations, emergency shelters, wellness centres, and short-term hotel stays.

In 2023-24, our government is investing \$6.9 million to support Indigenous-led wellness centres in Saskatchewan, including the Saskatoon Tribal Council's Emergency Wellness Centre and a low-barrier supportive housing project in collaboration with Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services Inc.

Since 2021, we have invested \$25 million in initiatives to address homelessness, including \$14 million for new emergency shelter spaces and \$11 million for affordable and supportive housing. Investments include:

- \$9.40 million from the Rental Development Program to develop affordable housing for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- \$1.65 million from the Saskatchewan Co-investment Program to support two federally funded Rapid Housing Initiatives in Regina and Saskatoon;
- \$6.61 million over two years (2021-2022 and 2022-2023) to support two wellness centre pilot projects in Regina and Saskatoon;
- \$700,000 in total over two years (2021-2022 and 2022-2023) for the Sawêyhtotân homelessness outreach project in Saskatoon;
- \$5.0 million for the purchase of a property in Saskatoon to lease to the Saskatoon Tribal Council's Wellness Centre; and
- \$1.7 million in additional funding to community partners across the province to support seasonal cost pressures and increase emergency shelter capacity.

The Ministry of Social Services continues to collaborate with Indigenous and community partners and all levels of government to improve outcomes for people experiencing homelessness. Together, we are developing new approaches to better support individuals who need more than a home to remain connected to housing.

Substance use is frequently the product of complex social issues such as mental illness, distress, poverty, past trauma, or discrimination, and has devastating effects on individuals, families and communities.

Our government funds services for problematic alcohol and drug use either directly or through the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) that focus on prevention, awareness, education, treatment and harm reduction.

We continue to invest new funding in the area of mental health and addictions and support many new initiatives. In 2023-24, our government is investing a record total of \$518 million for mental health and addictions services and supports across Saskatchewan, with \$438.4 million for mental health services and \$79.2 million for addictions services. Supports include outpatient and inpatient alcohol and drug treatment services within the SHA and community-based organizations.

Targeted mental health and addictions-related investments in the 2023-24 budget include:

- \$2.27 million for additional treatment spaces (towards the goal of at least 150 spaces);
- \$2.25 million for suicide prevention initiatives;
- \$1.7 million for expansion of Family Services Saskatchewan's brief counselling services for children and youth across the province;
- \$1.2 million Home for Youth Partnership with the Ministry of Social Services;
- \$1 million for the Saskatchewan Drug Task Force;
- \$240,000 for continued support of Police and Crisis Team;
- \$475,000 to improve access to withdrawal management/detox services by increasing the number of detoxification treatment spaces; and
- \$100,000 to address overdose deaths by increasing accessibility of Take Home Naloxone kits to the public.

We are investing \$6 million this year for inpatient support beds for individuals with intensive mental health needs transitioning from hospital/acute care to communities in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and North Battleford. We are also investing \$586,000 for housing supports in partnership with Phoenix Residential Society.

In partnership between the Ministry of Health and the Saskatchewan Health Authority, efforts are underway to add more than 150 addictions treatment spaces that include virtual outpatient services, day treatment, detox/withdrawal management, inpatient addictions treatment, and recovery services.

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We recognize there is more to do and to that end, we are working alongside you and our partners across the province. We appreciate your concerns and share your desire to find solutions. We look forward to continued collaboration.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature, appearing to read 'Everett Hindley', written in a cursive style.

Everett Hindley
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health

A large, stylized blue ink signature, appearing to read 'Gene Makowsky', written in a cursive style.

Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services

cc: Honourable Paul Merriman, Minister of Health