



Government
— of —
Saskatchewan

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

Legislative Building
Regina, Canada S4S 0B3

Our File: 23-1625

JAN 12 2024

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

Dear Jyotsna:

Thank you for sharing the information presented at the November 16, 2023, Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners public meeting about Saskatoon police involvement with complex needs individuals.

As you know, substance use disorder 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.

On October 6, 2023, our government announced a new Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions. The new action plan has three pillars of focus: building capacity for treatment, improving the system, and transitioning to a Recovery-Oriented System of Care with a focus on treatment and recovery.

The new action plan, found online at www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/saskatchewan-health-initiatives/mental-health-and-addictions-action-plan, includes concrete steps to create a seamless path into treatment and recovery. Work will begin immediately on several key initiatives, including implementation of new addictions spaces, expansion of the Mental Health Capacity Building program to more schools, and establishing a centralized intake for mental health and addictions service to improve access to services.

New funding to support work beginning immediately under the action plan will total \$49.4 million when fully implemented in the fifth year of the plan. Targeted initiatives beginning immediately in 2023-24 include exceeding our original target of adding 150 addictions treatment spaces to achieve at least 200 spaces by the end of our fiscal year. This will include virtual outpatient services, day treatment, detox/withdrawal management, inpatient addictions treatment, and recovery services. We are also committed to adding 350 new addiction treatment spaces, for a total of at least 500 spaces under the new action plan.

Funding will be provided for up to 120 new emergency shelter spaces in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and other communities based on need, which will result in a total of approximately 500 permanent emergency shelter spaces available in Saskatchewan. Most of the new shelters will provide increased support services onsite, allowing our partners to better meet the unique needs of their clients.

In addition, 155 new supportive housing spaces are being developed for people who need more than a home to remain connected to housing. For example, the recently opened Kotawān project in Saskatoon provides 55 supportive housing units for vulnerable individuals and families in partnership with the Saskatoon Tribal Council. Tenants at the Kotawān property receive onsite support services based on their individual needs to help them maintain stable housing.

We will also provide funding for new Complex Needs Emergency Shelters with 15 spaces in Regina and 15 spaces in Saskatoon. Many people struggling with complex challenges find themselves in emergency rooms or police cells. With the Complex Needs Emergency Shelters, police services will have another place to bring individuals who are intoxicated and exhibiting behaviors that present a danger to themselves or to the public. These are not individuals who are charged with a criminal offence.

A complex needs emergency shelter provides a secure and medically supervised place for individuals to stay for up to 24 hours. These shelters also provide an opportunity to connect individuals to other community services such as withdrawal management services, inpatient addiction treatment, shelters, financial aid, and further supports to ensure successful recovery.

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Outreach responses help the Ministry of Social Services connect with vulnerable individuals to initiate services, including food, shelter, supports, referrals, and housing options. The goal of these responses is to move people as quickly as possible into a stabilizing environment. Outreach responses also create opportunities to improve our understanding of why some individuals may be hesitant or unwilling to accept services.

In 2023-24, the Ministry of Social Services is investing \$656,000 to place up to 10 staff members at community-based organizations to support clients where they are. Building on these current services, an investment of \$600,000 in 2024-25 will develop additional outreach responses in collaboration with community partners. The expanded outreach services will be staffed by non-government employees who will collaborate with ministry staff, other government agencies, and community-based organizations to connect individuals to the services they need.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services



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

cc: Honourable Everett Hindley, Minister of Health