



BACKGROUND

Supportive Housing for People with Substance Use Issues

July 13, 2009

Ontario is providing \$16 million over three years to fund 1,000 supportive housing units for people with substance use issues or concurrent disorders.

This client-centered supportive housing program includes services based on the “Housing First” model for a harm-reduction. This model provides supportive housing to homeless people with substance abuse issues, whether or not they are enrolled in treatment programs. The housing is integrated into the community so that clients can feel safe and secure in the housing environment.

The funding also provides for case managers who provide support on issues such as landlord-tenant relations, budgeting and crisis intervention.

Housing supports reduce homelessness and introduce stability into peoples’ lives. Flexible and tailored to each client, it builds on existing links to other community supports, such as social assistance, affordable housing, and life skills and education /employment counselling.

Effective treatment for people with chronic substance use problems or concurrent disorders requires comprehensive, integrated and client-centred services, and stable housing:

- Most people who have substance use issues or concurrent disorders can be successfully housed if they are given the right supports when they want them (e.g. harm reduction approach);
- Most people with concurrent disorders will not accept an environment that is too restrictive or rigid and heavily controlled.

Minister’s Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has created the [Minister’s Advisory Group on Mental Health and Addictions](#) made up of consumers, family members, health care providers and researchers from across the province. It includes a range of perspectives such as children and youth, Aboriginal peoples, seniors, women and adults in the workplace. Input from this group, the Select Committee and the Interministerial Committee will be used to develop a long-term strategy for mental health and addictions for the province.

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Five working (theme) groups have been established to support the Advisory Group, including; system design, healthy communities, consumer partnerships, early identification and early intervention, and strengthening the workforce.

The Advisory Group recognizes that people with varied backgrounds, life experiences and expertise can make an important contribution to their work, and plan to engage stakeholders across the province.

Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions

An all-party committee has been formed by the Ontario legislature to help develop ways to improve access to mental health and addictions services in the province.

[The Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions](#) – with representatives from all three political parties – will work with consumers, health care providers, experts and other interested parties to determine the mental health and addictions needs that currently exist. The committee is expected to issue a report in 2010 that will:

- Determine the mental health and addictions needs of children and young adults, First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples as well as seniors
- Explore innovative approaches to delivering services in the community
- Identify ways to leverage existing opportunities and initiatives within the current mental health and addictions system.

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

Media Contacts:

Steve Erwin, Minister's Office, 416-326-3986

David Jensen, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 416-314-6197

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