
North West Local Health Integration Network

A Healthy Foundation: Bridging the Gap Between Health and Housing Addressing Supportive Housing Needs in Northwestern Ontario

Research has shown that a stable and reliable home is a major determinant of health. Unfortunately, not everyone in Ontario has access to reliable, affordable and safe housing or is able to successfully maintain their tenancy due to their specific needs or challenges they may face.

That's why the North West LHIN is pleased to have collaborated with partners in the region on October 17 and 18 to host a housing forum to provide an opportunity for various stakeholders to strengthen partnerships, identify barriers and opportunities, and develop new solutions for unmet housing and support needs for those in Northwestern Ontario who are vulnerable, and who would benefit from improved supportive housing services. Titled, "A Healthy Foundation, Bridging the Gap Between Health and Housing," the event was organized by the North West LHIN, the District Social Service Administration Boards (Thunder Bay, Rainy River and Kenora) and Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services. The event was a resounding success and gave stakeholders a unique opportunity to share ideas, build connections and develop solutions that will help address the unmet supportive housing needs across the region. These needs include access to a greater range of affordable housing stock, as well as adequate supports to enable individuals to maintain their homes.

The next step will be to complete the Supportive Housing needs assessment being completed by the partners, which will prioritize needs across the region, as well as continue to plan collaboratively with respect to specific housing projects under development. As



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there was a recognition of the value of bringing stakeholders together, there may also be plans of holding another forum within the next year.

The North West LHIN would like to thank everyone for their participation in exploring innovative strategies to address the housing needs of the people of Northwestern Ontario.

"Addressing the supportive housing needs of vulnerable populations will help individuals and families face social, cultural, political and financial changes in our society," said Laura Kokocinski, CEO, North West LHIN, who spoke at the event. "It will also help care providers, system planners, supportive housing advocates and supporters address the technological changes and growing demands being placed on our health care, housing and social service systems."

"Supportive housing initiatives and stable living arrangements are an important part of improved population health in Northwestern Ontario," adds Brian Ktytor, Acting Chief Operating Officer, North West LHIN. "This year's Housing Forum is an event that highlighted the ways in which communities, neighborhoods and the home can create a foundation for improved health and quality of life in Northwestern Ontario."

Contacts:

Petronilla Ndebele
Director, Corporate Communications
and Community Engagement
North West LHIN
Tel. 807-684-9425 ext. 2039
Petronilla.Ndebele@lhins.on.ca

Karl Oczkowski
Corporate Communications and Community
Engagement Consultant
North West LHIN
Tel. 807-684-9425 ext. 2024
karl.oczkowski@lhins.on.ca