



## NEWS RELEASE

### **CMHA election monitor: Supportive housing investment Strengthens people and the economy**

(Toronto, Tuesday, May 24, 2022) – Increasing inflation and home prices have been front and centre in the provincial election campaign. Missing in the debate is the significant economic and mental health impact of investments in “supportive housing.”

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario urges party leaders to consider the benefits of supportive housing whenever they speak about home ownership, increasing housing supply, jobs and a healthy economy.

“The economy and mental health and addiction are not mutually exclusive subjects,” said Camille Quenneville, CEO, CMHA Ontario.

Evidence shows that building and providing supportive housing leads to individual benefits, economic spinoff and, most notably, cost savings for the taxpayer:

- Every \$10 invested in supportive housing results in an average savings of \$21.72 across the health care, social services and justice systems
- For every \$1 invested in housing construction, there is \$1.52 multiplier effect on the local economy
- Providing social housing (i.e. supportive housing) costs \$613 per month
- Providing a shelter bed is \$2,100 per month or three times more expensive.
- Providing a correctional bed is \$4,300 per month, seven times more expensive
- Providing a hospital bed is \$13,500 per month, 22 times more expensive

While many factors can lead to homelessness, mental health plays a significant role. An estimated 25 to 50 per cent of homeless people live with a mental health condition. For some individuals, particularly those leaving hospital after a lengthy stay, housing with supports can help them establish themselves and thrive in the community.

This is why CMHA Ontario’s largest provincial budget request is always for greater funding for supportive housing. This election campaign, CMHA Ontario calls on parties to commit to building 3,000 supportive housing units annually at an approximate cost of \$242 million plus another \$45 million per year for associated support services.

#### What is supportive housing?

Supportive housing allows people who may need on- or off-site mental health or addictions supports to live independently in the community.

These supports are multidisciplinary and can include a social worker, nurse, occupational therapist, psychiatrist, peer support worker and addictions specialist. Supports can also be socially-based such as homemaking and personal care, financial literacy, life skills and employment support.

Evidence indicates that providing supportive housing as a key first step in treatment is effective in improving the housing stability of adults with severe mental illness.

“If you think about it, most people no matter social or economic status are better able to move forward with productive lives if they have a safe and stable place to live,” Quenneville said. “This is especially true for those living with mental health and addiction issues.”

CMHA Ontario is using week five of its “I Choose” election campaign to spotlight the need for greater action on supportive housing.

For more information, visit [www.ichoosemha.ca](http://www.ichoosemha.ca) or follow #ichoosemha on social media.

**Fast Facts:**

- The annual economic cost of mental illness in Canada is estimated at over \$50 billion per year. This includes health care costs, lost productivity, and reductions in health-related quality of life.
- The annual economic cost of substance use in Canada is estimated at nearly \$40 billion. This includes costs related to healthcare, criminal justice, and lost productivity
- The cost of a workplace disability leave for a mental illness is about double the cost of a leave due to a physical illness.

***About Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario***

*Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario is a not-for-profit, charitable organization funded by the provincial government. We work to improve the lives of all Ontarians through leadership, collaboration and continual pursuit of excellence in community-based mental health and addictions services. Our vision is a society that embraces and invests in the mental health of all people. We are a trusted advisor to government, contributing to health systems development through policy formulation and recommendations that promote positive mental health.*

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For more information, contact:

Mike Feenstra  
Communications, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario  
T: 416-203-0427  
E: [mfeenstra@ontario.cmha.ca](mailto:mfeenstra@ontario.cmha.ca)