



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOMELESSNESS KEY ISSUE FOR DNSSAB AT ROMA

North Bay, ON: The District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) will be meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Paul Calandra, at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference in Toronto next week. The annual conference, that runs from January 21-23, provides opportunities for municipal officials and district social services board representatives to meet directly with provincial ministry representatives to discuss key issues and challenges in rural areas of the province.

The DNSSAB will be advocating for annual funding for a mobile outreach team that will be able to travel the district, provide on-site supports, transportation and service navigation to unsheltered people, particularly those living with mental illness and problematic substance use. The request includes the purchase of a vehicle for the mobile team. The DNSSAB will also be requesting annual funding for additional supported housing units for some of the most vulnerable individuals in the district.

“Capacity issues and a lack of resources throughout the district continue to present gaps and barriers when trying to help people experiencing homelessness,” says DNSSAB Board Chair, Mark King.

“Being able to provide transportation, outreach supports, and affordable, appropriate and supported housing will go a long way in closing that gap and reducing barriers,” adds King.

The DNSSAB delegation will also be requesting funding from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for a pilot program that would see the creation of 20-30 much needed affordable housing units through home conversion.

King is also on the executive of the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) that will be meeting with provincial representatives on several challenges facing district social services board in the north. Some of these delegations will be in collaboration with the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA).

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The conference will feature presentations, sessions and workshops focused on issues affecting rural Ontarians. Ontario Premier Doug Ford, opposition leaders, and provincial ministers are among the key presenters.

This year's theme, Closer to Home, refers to ROMA's recent policy focus on access to primary healthcare services in rural Ontario, the barriers that prevent the northern population from accessing primary medical and mental health services. ROMA's newest paper, *Fill the Gaps Closer to Home*, provides 22 recommendations to help alleviate these barriers.

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