

June 28, 2016

**Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs  
Bill 3: The Mental Health Amendment Act**

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According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, 20 per cent of all Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime.

Given the complex links between mental health and the criminal justice system, police responses to mental health issues continue to be a topic of significant discussion both within Manitoba and across Canada.

We are very pleased to see *The Mental Health Amendment Act* reintroduced into the Legislative Assembly. Thank you to the Government of Manitoba, The Honourable Heather Stefanson and The Honourable Kelvin Goertzen for introducing this Bill.

The AMM has voiced its concerns about the time incurred by officers when supervising and transporting patients under *The Mental Health Act*.

Our concern stems from both public safety issues and the financial burdens placed on municipalities.

The transport and supervision of individuals under the auspices of Manitoba's *Mental Health Act* reduces police service coverage and response times, particularly in small rural communities. But it does affect ALL communities, including cities.

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It can also contribute substantially to overtime costs and competing demands on police resources, while frustrating officers.

The AMM's advocacy efforts in this area resulted in the introduction of legislation prior to the provincial election which would enable a qualified person to supervise MHA patients at medical facilities until examinations or assessments are completed.

*The Mental Health Amendment Act* would enable a qualified person other than a police officer to assume custody of and remain with an individual who's awaiting a mental health assessment.

This would allow officers to be available to respond to other public safety concerns.

With one in five Canadians experiencing a mental illness in their lifetime, these proposed legislative changes should significantly reduce policing costs and help ensure police service coverage in local communities.

We would urge you to pass this Bill, which will reduce police time spent on transporting and supervising patients under The Mental Health Act; and as a result, ensure municipalities can maintain appropriate police service coverage and response times.

Thank you.

Mayor Chris Goertzen

President