

# ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES POSITION PAPER

MINISTER OF MENTAL HEALTH, WELLNESS AND RECOVERY | AUDREY GORDON  
APRIL 12, 2021



ASSOCIATION OF  
MANITOBA  
MUNICIPALITIES

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Audrey Gordon and representatives of Manitoba Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery.

The AMM encourages the Province to consider municipal concerns as well as the effects of funding decisions on local communities throughout the budget process.

This document outlines the AMM's position and recommendations on a number of important municipal issues relevant to the Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery portfolio.

## PRIORITY ITEMS:

**COMMUNITY  
SAFETY ISSUES**

**PATIENT  
TRANSFERS UNDER  
THE MENTAL  
HEALTH ACT**

## **PARTNERS IN GROWTH**

The AMM looks forward to working with the Province of Manitoba to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.

## Priority Item #1

### Community Safety Issues

The AMM recommends the government:

✓ ***Ensure municipalities receive all necessary tools, resources and sufficient funding to law enforcement to help mitigate illicit drug use within local communities.***

- Given the increasing prevalence of methamphetamines, illicit drug use presents an urgent and growing threat to local communities and public health throughout Manitoba.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted individuals living with mental illness and addictions throughout Manitoba.
- Over the past year, the need for addiction supports and resources has become heightened due to the pandemic.
- Currently, there are insufficient resources to educate Manitobans about methamphetamines as well as unsatisfactory supports for those addicted and their families.
- As community safety and crime prevention are among the top priorities of Manitoba municipalities, the AMM encourages Manitoba Health, Wellness and Recovery to increase support and necessary resources to help mitigate illicit drug use in local communities.
- It is vital that the Province provide sufficient funding for readily available and comprehensive rehabilitation programs for those addicted.

## Priority Item #2

### Patient Transfers under the Mental Health Act

The AMM recommends the government:

✓ ***Expand the newly-created MHA transfer hub system to other parts of Manitoba***

- According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, 20 per cent of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime.
- Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic slowdown have negatively affected many people's mental health and created new barriers for people already suffering from mental illness.
- 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.
- As the *Mental Health Amendment Act* enables a 'qualified person' other than a police officer to assume custody of and supervise an individual who's awaiting a mental health assessment, these changes should significantly reduce policing costs and help ensure police service coverage in local communities.
- The AMM has repeatedly urged the Province of Manitoba to expedite the development of the training program and guidelines for 'qualified persons' in consultation with our organization.
- Moreover, the AMM also encourages the department to work with Manitoba Justice, Manitoba Health and Seniors Care, and Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) to expand the MHA transfer hub system, particularly in Northern Manitoba and the Parkland region.

## Appendix – AMM Active Resolutions

### **AMM Resolution #18-2019**

#### **Topic: The Mental Health Act**

Sponsor(s): City of Winkler (Central District), Town of Altona (Central District), Municipality of Pembina (Central District), Municipality of Lorne (Central District), Municipality of Louise (Central District), RM of East St. Paul (Eastern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Justice; Manitoba Health and Seniors Care

WHEREAS under Section 15(1) of The Mental Health Act a peace officer who takes a person into custody for an involuntary medical examination under Section 11 or 12 or an involuntary psychiatric assessment under Section 9 shall remain with the person and retain custody of them, or arrange for another peace officer to do so, until the examination or assessment is completed or the person is admitted to the facility; and

WHEREAS The Mental Health Act is amended under The Mental Health Amendment Act in: Sub-Section 15(1) by adding "or a qualified person" after "for another peace officer"; after Sub-Section 15(3) by adding: Sub-Section 15(4) in this section, "qualified person" means a person who holds a position specified in the regulations or who has received training specified in the regulations; and

WHEREAS peace officers are taken away from regular duty for extended periods of time, leaving their municipalities exposed to greater risk and public safety issues when they are not available; and

WHEREAS in addition to public safety issues, significant overtime costs are incurred by municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to: expedite the implementation of "qualified persons" at healthcare facilities; and provide a safe and secure area at a healthcare facility for persons in custody while awaiting examination and/or assessment.

### **AMM Resolution #19-2019**

#### **Topic: Methamphetamine Issues**

Sponsor(s): City of Dauphin (Parkland District)

Department(s): Manitoba Justice; Manitoba Health and Seniors Care

WHEREAS methamphetamine (meth) is an illicit drug that is highly addictive, becoming more widely available, and is inexpensive to purchase; and

WHEREAS the effects of the use of meth are destructive to individuals and families, can result in violence, and are life altering; and

WHEREAS there are insufficient resources for education regarding meth, insufficient supports for those addicted and their families, and insufficient resources to enforce laws regarding the crimes related to meth; and

WHEREAS many of the effects of meth use present indirect and direct costs to municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to provide sufficient funding to educate the population regarding the hazards of the use of methamphetamines in hopes to prevent its use, provide sufficient funding for readily available and comprehensive rehabilitation programs for those addicted, and sufficient funding for law enforcement associated with the crimes related to the distribution of meth.



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