

To: Delegation during AMO Conference August 2023
From: FONOM Board
Date: August 21, 2023
Subject: Recommendation to address Ontario's Mental Health & Addictions Crisis

ISSUE:

There has been a system-wide overload of Health and Social programs to handle our communities' current Mental Health and Addiction crisis. The existing systems were not designed to address the increasing numbers of the now concurrent and converging mental health and addiction issues that are partly driving homelessness.

Further complicating the situation is the lack of authority to safely and humanely support those actively suffering on our streets. Currently, no legislation provides authority to temporarily detain individuals that are highly intoxicated from a drug or substance when their own, or others, safety is at risk.

Often, drug-intoxicated individuals walk carelessly into traffic; many lay unconscious in alleys/vestibules, suffer head trauma from falling, are victimized for theft/assault, and at times accost members of the general public.

Secondly, if such authority existed, there is no place currently to hold and medically support those who are grossly intoxicated for their safety while they stabilize.

As a result, the public feels unsafe in their communities, witnessing gross intoxication, drug-induced psychosis, and at times, being confronted by those suffering from severe mental health and addiction issues. Conversely, those suffering from Mental Health and Addictions are left to their own devices, lacking support and initiated care. Municipalities are facing the brunt of the impacts due to these issues.

ANALYSIS:

FONOM/NOMA/NODSA's work on Mental Health, Addiction, and Homelessness and the Bail Reform Taskforce have converged to address a problematic convergence of Social Issues. Agencies, Hospitals, and many of our communities are spending considerable resources to tackle Mental Health, Addiction & Homelessness issues. Despite best efforts, Mental Health incidents and drug overdose numbers are steadily increasing, and our municipal infrastructure cannot handle the growing need.

The Mental Health Act, circa 1990, now 33 years old, and in the opinion of our municipal citizens and human service providers, needs review and modernization to address the current crisis. Although significant changes were made in 2000, much has evolved since that time, including the closure of the North Bay Psychiatric Hospital, the availability and high potency of illicit street drugs, the overdose crisis, and a global pandemic that inadvertently removed in-person social supports and services while government and human service agencies struggled to find a solution.

The Liquor Licence and Control Act, 2019, Sec 31(2) provides the authority for a police officer or conservation officer to arrest without warrant any person who is intoxicated by alcohol if, in the opinion of the officer, it is necessary to do so for the safety of any person. Over time, the incidents of gross intoxication and harm have increased due to drug consumption, not alcohol, rendering this particular authority inapplicable and creating a void in support.

Historically, Police Services would house individuals arrested for public intoxication; however, due to increasing awareness of medical concerns and public safety, Police cells are no longer a viable option for intoxicated individuals, thus creating the additional need for secure detoxification and support beds.

Secure detoxification beds offer individuals a safe and medically supported opportunity to stabilize without charge. Before release, and now with a clearer mind, social supports can be provided to address root causes and navigate the mental health/addictions ecosystem if services are accepted. This type of

interaction offers the best-case scenario for a safe and sober connection to services.

The funding of Secure Beds can not be done by the Province alone. The Federal Government must provide Ontario with new funding for this approach. FONOM would like to help the Ministers as they work with their Federal partners to secure the financing. Municipalities also have a role as more communities are contributing to supportive housing. FONOM will continue encouraging these often-supported measures through our membership and other municipal associations.

RECOMMENDATION:

FONOM recommends that the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, and the Minister of Health work together to address the current Mental Health and Addiction Crisis by reviewing the Mental Health Act and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, providing an opportunity to update definitions and authorities to the current need. Particularly, legislation that could address the ability to arrest without warrant, those found intoxicated by drugs or other substances, without charge, for the safety of the individual and/or the safety of others, and language recognizing and affirming the comorbidity and concurrence of Mental Health and Addictions.

FONOM also recommends that the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, and the Minister of Health work together to establish medically (and socially) supported secure beds for individuals to stabilize safely for 24hrs-48hrs. These stabilization and detox beds would hold those in a safe and medically supportive environment, providing 24-hour supervision, assessment, and offers of treatment support. FONOM would work with the Province to secure additional funding from the Federal Government, as they have a significant role in addressing this issue across the country.

FONOM believes that short of the Province establishing Psychiatric Facilities, **Ontario Homes** to secure the most dangerous in our community. FONOM believes the review and changes to the Mental Health Act and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, along with funding support for Secure Detox Beds, is the necessary next step and approach to addressing the mental health epidemic and addictions in our communities.

To: Delegation during AMO Conference August 2023
From: FONOM Board
Date: August 22, 2023
Subject: Provincial Grant Provided to Northern Ontario Health Units

ISSUE:

Northern Ontario Municipalities are concerned with any reduction of the Provincial Grant provided for Northern Ontario Health Unit funding. Also, if the mitigation funding is decreased, many of our members would face great hardship. Responses from our membership show that Health Unit levies range from 0.79% – 3.23% of a Municipalities' Budget (the average Health Unit levy in Northeastern Ontario is 1.44%).

RECOMMENDATION:

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) requests that the Government of Ontario increase the grant they provide today by moving back to funding levels for Northern Ontario Health Units to the 2018 percentage of 75. Further, the Province again assumes 100% funding for those programs identified as such in the public health budget 2018-19.

ANALYSIS:

The Services provided by the Health Units to our member communities are vital, and with considerable financial support from the Province during COVID, they provided exceptional Health Care to residents. This Government and its Ministries appreciate how vast Northern Ontario is, but the area overseen by the Porcupine Health Unit is 270,000 sq km (note Southern Ontario area is 114,217 sq km).

Many of our communities are geographically isolated, and providing universal Public Health Care is challenging and costly. The Health Units also oversee Public Health in unorganized areas with Provincial funding.

Northern Medical Officers of Health and their Boards have repeatedly asked for increased and sustainable base funding that considers the unique challenges faced in Northern Ontario. It is vital to Public Health to work effectively on the many public health disparities northern residents face. Public Health takes the lead or takes part in many of the foundations for action to improve health equity in the North. Leveling up public health funding and other funding in the North will make Health Units more resilient to the next emergency and allow Northerners to achieve better health overall.

"Under the Health Promotion and Protection Act, since 1997, municipal governments are legally responsible for 100% of public health costs."

The Funding for most of the Health Units programs in the Province was 75% funded by the Provincial Government and 25% by the Unit's Municipal Partners. There were also uniquely funded programs that the Province fully funded. The Units are responsive to the Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability (Standards) set by the Ministries of the Government. The Municipal Partners had representation on the Unit Boards and the Provincial Appointees but had no input on the Standards.

The Provincial Budget 2019 announced that the Government was changing the Grant amount they contribute to the Units. The Budget document stated: *"the current structure of Ontario's public health units does not allow for consistent service delivery, could be better coordinated with the broader system and better aligned with the current Government priorities."* Following the Budget announcement, the Health Units in the North increased their levy by 10% and planned for the same next year, which would have meant a 42% increase by 2021.

The Province also spoke to Public Health Modernization and consolidation. FONOM has previously shared, in August 2020, our opposition and concerns with any amalgamation with the Province.

Then the Government and the Medical Officer of Health worked together, with so many others, to bring the Province through the Pandemic.

Now that the Pandemic is behind us, FONOM wants to share with you that our membership in the Northeastern part of the Province cannot afford any increases more significant than 1.44% (*note that for many, that amount will be a hardship*). There is great concern that any further shift onto small, northern, and rural Ontario municipalities will be a financial burden.

FONOM still believes that public health in Northern Ontario is funded through regular provincial taxation, not property taxation (*especially with an amalgamation*). Until the Government fully assumes Public Health, we ask the Province to move back to funding level Northern Ontario Health Units to the 2018 percentage of 75. Further, the Province again assumes 100% funding for those programs identified as such in the public health budget 2018-19.

Documents

[Northern Ontario Health Equity Strategy](#)

[Being Ready - Ensuring Public Health Preparedness for Infectious Outbreaks and Pandemics –](#)

[Ontario Atlas of Adult Mortality](#)

[Funding Letter from NBPSHU](#)

	2023 increase	% of Annual Budget
NBPSHU		
Parry Sound	0.90%	1.50%
Perry	3%	1.55%
Seguin	6%	0.71%
Mattawan	0.04%	1.00%
Burks Falls	0.98%	0.88%
Callander	0.01%	
McKellar	0.97%	0.79%
Nipissing	-1.02%	1.00%
South River	0.97%	2.49%
Machar	0.96%	
Tem HU		
Cobalt	0.01%	1.50%
Kirkland Lake	2.68%	3.24%
Latchford	1.13%	
Armstrong	1%	
Coleman	0.05%	
Englehart	0.94%	0.98%
Coleman	0.97%	
Evanturel	0.91%	3.30%
McGarry	0.96%	
SUD District HU		
St. Charles	1.20%	1.60%
Killarney	1.12%	
Spanish	0.90%	1.80%
Assiginack	0.91%	0.80%
Algoma HU		
MMA&A		2.55%
Huron Shores	0.89%	0.01%
Wawa		2.09%
Plummer	0.91%	1.79%
St.Josephs	1.16	1.20%
Porcupine		
Hearst	0.97%	1.20%
Kapuskasing		1.50%
Mattice Val Cote	1.05%	
Greenstone	0.00%	0.00%
Smooth Rock Falls	0.96%	0.90%
Hornepayne	0.94%	
Val Rita-Harty		
Renfrew		
South Algonquin	0.10%	

To: Delegation during AMO Conference August 2023
From: FONOM Board
Date: August 21, 2023
Subject: School Board Trustee Elections in 2026

ISSUE:

Municipal Staff oversees the Municipal and multiple School Board elections. The ratepayers of the Municipality are currently responsible for covering all costs associated with the Elections, even when there is no Municipal Election.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) requests that the Government of Ontario make school boards responsible for conducting their own trustee election or that the school boards fully compensate municipalities for overseeing such trustee elections.

ANALYSIS:

The Boards often will not allow their facilities (school) to be used on Election Day. The biggest challenges Municipality have with the School Board Elections are;

Citizens do not understand the rules that go along with being able to vote for a particular board (i.e., their children go to catholic school, but the parents are not catholic, so they cannot vote for the Trustee for the Catholic Board). The 2026 Election will be even more confusing for School Board Elections with the Province taking over the voters' list. Currently, MPAC cannot share an individual's school board designation with the province. FONOM knows they are still working on this issue, but if MPAC cannot share this information, this will add an extraordinary amount of work for the Clerk's Department. Going so far as saying the municipality will hire additional election assistants to have one person dedicated to ensuring everyone's school board information is correct.

School Board Elections and “non-resident” Electors are always confusing for Election workers. If you do not live in the Municipality (non-resident), you cannot vote for a school board trustee – you must vote for the trustee in the Municipality you reside in.

80-90 % of the calls the Clerks Department receives before and on Election Day are related to School Board issues.

Also, 31 Municipalities in 2022 had Councils that were acclaimed. Those Municipalities still had to prepare and operate School Board Elections at ratepayers’ expense. We polled those Municipalities, and their costs were between \$3000-30,000. The total cost of 2022 Municipal and two of the four School Board Elections in North Bay was \$324,735.00, with the Clerk attributing 50% of the cost to the School Board Elections (noting that the Ballot cost only \$0.29; it is the education of the election worker and citizens is the challenge)

Due to Provincial Legislation, there currently is no financial support for a Municipality to help offset the cost of the Trustee Election. When there is no Municipal Election, the Municipality still has the responsibility and cost.

Due to the challenges, costs, and responsibility to conduct the trustee elections. FONOM believes the School Boards operate their own elections or financially compensate the municipality for the costs incurred.

	Amount for Trustee Elections
Municipal Councils that were Acclaimed	
1 Township of Armour	-
2 Township of Armstrong	
3 Town of Blind River (6 acclaimed of 7 member council, 1 vacancy)	\$ 26,044.06
4 Township of Brethour	
5 Township of Chamberlain (also 2018)	
6 Township of Chapleau	
7 Municipality of Charlton and Dack (also 2018)	
8 Township of Dawn-Euphemia	13,310.69
9 Township of Dorion (also 2018)	
10 Township of Drummond/North Elmsley	\$ 29,126.00
11 Township of East Garafraxa (also 2018)	\$ 3,302.75
12 Town of Enniskillen (also 2018)	\$ 4,026.30
13 Township of Evanturel (also 2018)	
14 Front of Yonge Township	
15 Municipality of Gordon/Barrie Island (also 2018)	
16 Township of Hilliard (4 acclaimed, 5 member council, 1 vacancy)	
17 Township of Hilton (also 2018)	
18 Village of Hilton Beach	
19 Township of Hornepayne	-
20 Township of Howick	\$ 14,702.00
21 Township of Kerns (also 2018)	
22 Township of Lake of the Woods	
23 Town of Laurentian Hills	
24 Town of Minto	\$ 62,000.00
25 Village of Oil Springs (also 2018)	\$ 5,932.14
26 Township of Perry	\$ 3,012.00
27 Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls	
28 Village of South River	
29 Township of Tay	\$ 29,526.00
30 Township of The Archipelago	
31 Town of Thessalon	\$ 4,425.29
32 Village of Thornloe (also 2018)	

Comments

- We are not experts on the questions that candidates have with regard to each board, this again would be further justification to have the boards run and manage their own elections.
- It was difficult at times trying to get timely information from the school boards. We were left trying our best to answer questions about districts, lead municipality, compensation etc., for the candidates running in the school board election.

- What isn't included is all the soft costs, as time is not tracked and all the administrative and coordination required from our Clerk and Deputy to administer the school board election. Being a small rural township, our School Board election candidate-ward boundaries are combined with three other municipalities, and as you can imagine it's a bit of a challenge.
- I should note that I do not book admin time for election purposes. The expenses are direct payouts by the Township for materials, wages, and advertising. Advertising was shared by most of the County municipalities to reduce costs. I should also note that we made use of the existing inventory of election forms and ballot boxes.
- No school board Election - However, there was an expense of almost \$18,000.00 for the election due to having to pay for the electronic voting and training, regardless of whether it was used or not.
- Including advertisements, mailing costs for Voter Information cards to electors, payments to Simply Voting and Datafix for online



NOMA/FONOM/NOSDA - Multi-Ministry Notes
Monday August 21, 2023, 8:15-9:00am (EST)
Windsor Club Room, 2nd floor of the DoubleTree by Hilton - London

Attendees:

Mayor Wendy Landry of Shuniah, President of NOMA
Councillor Danny Whalen of Temiskaming Shores, President of FONOM
Councillor Michelle Boileau of Timmins, Chair of NOSDA
Mayor Fred Mota of Red Lake, Executive Vice President of NOMA
Mayor Ken Boshcoff of Thunder Bay, NOMA Executive Board Member
Mayor Rick Dumas of Marathon, NOMA Executive Board Member
Mark Figliomeni, CAO/Clerk of Red Rock, NOMA Board Member
Councillor Mark King of the City of North Bay, FONOM Board Member
Tammy MacKenzie CAO at District of Parry Sound Social Services Administration Board
Donna Stewart, CAO of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
Debbie Ewald, Board Member Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board
Andrea Strawson, Executive Director of NOMA
Mac Bain, Executive Director of FONOM
Fern Dominelli, Executive Director of NOSDA

Employment Services System

We are here to discuss an essential initiative that is underway in the Province of Ontario - the transformation of our employment services system in Northern Ontario. This transformation is driven by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, with the aim of creating a more efficient, streamlined, and outcome-focused system that better serves the needs of job seekers, businesses, and local communities.

The foundation of this transformation lies in the integration of employment services from social assistance into Employment Ontario. By doing so, we hope to reduce fragmentation, eliminate duplication, and, most importantly, improve the quality of service provided to our clients. The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development has designated 2 geographical regions in the North, being Northeastern Ontario and Northwestern Ontario.

The 789,519 people (2021 census) who live in Northern Ontario are spread across a land mass of 806,708 square kilometers, we have 0.98 people per square kilometer. By comparison, the City of Toronto has a land mass of 630.2 square kilometers with a population of 2,794,356 (2021 census) or 4,434 people per square kilometer.

NOSDA members are concerned that the two Northern regions are too large and vast a geographic area for only two Service System Managers. I am proud to share that the

Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) wholeheartedly supports this integration. NOSDA has been actively collaborating with colleges in Northern Ontario to develop a comprehensive employment service system. This collaborative approach leverages the expertise and resources of educational institutions, ensuring that we address the unique needs of job seekers and employers in our region. One key area in establishing Service System Managers in Northern Ontario will be the creation of employment performance zones. Basically, in order for a Service System Manager to receive their funding, they must achieve specific employment related targets negotiated with the Ministry.

Now it may be easier for a Service System Manager to achieve their targets in large urban centres in Northern Ontario, but the real challenge will be establishing performance zones where targets must be achieved within a sprawling geographic area. We are talking areas with unsophisticated transportation systems, minimal broadband connectivity, limited employment opportunities, lower education rates, etc. As you can imagine, achieving targets in rural and remote parts of Northern Ontario will require comprehensive planning and many meaningful partnerships.

This is where we believe CMSM's and DSSAB's can play a vital role in the success of the employment transformation. We are already well-established across the North and understand the uniqueness of our northern communities.

To ensure the success of this transformation, we present two key recommendations:

Engaging CMSMs and DSSABs: We believe it is crucial to involve Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) as full partners in determining and finalizing the employment performance zones. By doing so, we can ensure that the services and employment planning in Northern Ontario are precisely aligned with our region's unique requirements. This collaborative effort will foster better coordination and understanding, leading to more effective and tailored service delivery.

Expanding Services in Rural and Remote Areas: It is of utmost importance that we cater to the needs of job seekers and employers in our rural and remote areas. To achieve this, we recommend incentivizing our Service System Managers to expand their services to every corner of Northern Ontario. We must ensure that individuals in these regions have access to essential in-person resources to support their entry or re-entry into the local labour markets. While online services can complement these provisions, we must not do away with the invaluable 'human touch' in these regions.

In conclusion, it is critical that the transformation of our employment services system in Northern Ontario is achieved in partnership with us Northerners. By integrating services, collaborating with colleges, engaging CMSMs and DSSABs, and incentivizing Service System Managers, we can significantly enhance client service, improve accountability, and achieve better outcomes for both job seekers and employers. We urge the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development to take the necessary steps to implement these recommendations. Let us work together to ensure a brighter future for our communities and workforce, and to support sustainable development in the region.

Centre of Excellence & Northern Ontario School of Medicine

We would like to know the Ministry of Health's response to our recommendation in January regarding creating an advisory table for our 11 districts that would have direct dialogue with the Regional and Clinical Leads of the Ontario Centre of Excellence.

Also, our Organizations would like to speak to the urgent financial need of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. They require a permanent increase in annual base funding of \$4.0 million before the end of this fiscal year. We want a commitment from the Minister of Health and Deputy Premier Sylvia Jones, Minister of Colleges, and Universities Jill Dunlop, MPPs Greg Rickford, Vic Fedeli, George Pirie, Ross Romano, and Kevin Holland that they act now to is the annual base increased by 4 million, not wait until March.

Analysis

In January, we recommended the creation of an advisory table for each of the eleven districts in the North instead of a separate Northern Centre of Excellence. That would ensure a local strategic vision for a district's priority areas. These tables would have direct and continuous dialogue with the Regional and Clinical Leads of the Ontario Centre of Excellence.

This Government believes Ontario has different Health and Housing challenges than other Provinces in the Federation. Our three organizations believe we have different needs than the heavily populated Southern Ontario. We also acknowledge and know it to be true that Dryden and Temiskaming Shores have different needs and challenges. Therefore, Northern Ontario should be viewed as a One-Window Approach.

Our members lobbied for the creation of the Northern School of Medicine. Our members were thrilled when in 2022, this Government proclaimed NOSM a standalone university, becoming Canada's only independent medical university. Also, increasing the number of medical Doctors and Postgraduates spots was very well received.

The Northern School of Medicine has achieved its Vision by providing Innovative education and research for a healthier North. They have graduates that are our family physicians and specialists. But Northern Ontario still requires over 350 more physicians to serve those who don't have a family Doctor this morning.

The Northern School of Medicine Board has a zero-deficit policy, considering recent history is prudent. Therefore, an increase in annual base funding is required to allow for continuity and growing enrollment. This base funding increase is needed today to make the Northern School of Medicine what you and Northerners need to address our healthcare challenges.

Homelessness, Mental Health, & Addictions Series Upcoming Publication

In 2021, Northern Policy Institute partnered with the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, and the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association to analyze the state of homelessness, mental health, and addictions in Northern Ontario. The first report, titled “*More than Just a Number: Addressing the Homelessness, Addiction, and Mental Health Crisis in the North*,” established a baseline around homelessness, mental health, and substance use disorders in Northern Ontario and recommended eight strategies for government and community practitioners to address these issues.

The second report, “*Homelessness, Mental Health, and Substance Use in Northern Ontario, Revisited*,” provided concrete steps decision-makers and community practitioners can take to implement three of those recommendations in Northern Ontario: amend the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* to support service hub communities; support new and existing culturally sensitive community housing facilities for Indigenous peoples; and establish a Northern Mental Health and Addictions Centre in Northern Ontario.

The third report aims to expand on another three of the eight strategies recommended by the first piece: provide long-term funding for capital repairs on community housing units, support new and existing Housing First programs, and establish mandated mobile crisis intervention teams (MCIT) in municipalities throughout Northern Ontario. This report will be provided to government at ROMA 2024.

The steps identified in this report will be informed not only by the analysis of the initial paper’s findings highlighting that current efforts are not enough to address the worsening homelessness, addiction, and mental health crisis in Northern Ontario, but also by real-world case studies and best practices that will be gathered from literature and community members in Northern Ontario. From this information, this third report will be a guide tool that can inform decision-makers and community practitioners.

The health care crisis experienced across Northern Ontario is alarming. Municipalities are struggling to effectively fund public health care and retain adequate physicians and nurses to provide care to our residents. According to NOSM we need 364 physicians (211 family doctors and 153 medical specialists) in the North. Despite this need, as of April 1, 2023, your government reduced the number of Ministry of Health allocated physician spots on the Rural Northern Physician Group Agreement for multiple medical centres including Red Lake & Atikokan Hospitals among others. We need to retain funding for these health care professionals to avoid further exasperating the health care deficit.

Mental health, addiction, and homelessness cases are on the rise and municipalities are in desperate need of solutions. Municipalities across the North are experiencing serious financial pressures, most notably from inflation and funding inequities. Municipalities in Northern Ontario need financial relief and our organizations ask the province to restore the previous public health funding ratio of 75%/25% for all cost-shared programs and to assume 100% funding once again for those programs identified as such in the public health budget for 2018-2019. Additionally, we ask that you continue the current mitigation funding until such time as the cost-shared arrangement is restored to 75%/25% to account for the additional costs we experience to provide health care in the North.