

April 5, 2025

Hon. Sylvia Jones  
Deputy Premier of Ontario,  
& Minister of Health  
Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Minister of Health,

We know there are literally thousands of people in Ontario who are homeless. Some of the people are able to access a bed in a shelter, others may have family or a friend they can stay with for a brief period, often referred to as couch surfing. Far too many people are left to sleep in parks, alleyways or encampments. In the City of Barrie, we have an ongoing crisis because of the lack of housing.

The path to being homeless is not the same for everyone. Too often, we can state the people without a home are on drugs, mentally ill or recently released from prison with a bus ticket to Barrie. The fact is, a significant number of people become homeless because of job loss, personal illness or illness in their family, family dysfunction or a relationship ending. Sometimes the pressure and stress of being without a home leads people to turn to drugs and alcohol.

We do know that providing affordable housing is key for people's self-worth and dignity in order to move forward. Funding programs for those who suffer from mental illness is also very necessary, and we need more programs for those who are suffering from addiction. In Barrie, families, single people, and the elderly, all require assistance with affordable housing.

It is time for the Provincial Government to take back the responsibility for social housing as it was before the 1990's. Although the County of Simcoe is presently building units that will be "rent geared to income", the supply will be far less than the demand.

As a Christians, it is our moral responsibility to care for the vulnerable, and we have always prided ourselves on Canada being a compassionate nation. This current situation is unacceptable and calls for urgent action from the province. We are in this situation because of years of inadequate provincial funding in housing, mental health supports, and addiction treatment.

The provincial Ministry of Health needs to immediately increase funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment and supports, and in particular, to fund several thousand new supportive housing units for those with mental health and addiction problems.

Yours Sincerely,

FROM

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*Signature*

Name _____
Address _____
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