

June 19, 2020

Open Letter to Manitoba Police Services and Municipalities Social Workers & Police Services- Together for a Safer, Healthier Manitoba

Police Services throughout Manitoba provide a vital role in ensuring the safety of our citizens in challenging and difficult circumstances. Registered Social Workers engage people and communities to address life challenges and traumatic events, create change, and build resiliency. Both the justice and social services systems provide crisis intervention to citizens experiencing mental health challenges. As citizens call for change, the Manitoba College of Social Workers (the College) views this is an opportunity to work together for the benefit of all.

Marginalized, underserved, and racialized groups are more likely to experience trauma and less likely to receive the services and supports they need to recoverⁱ. The Black Lives Matter movement recognizes this reality, as does the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, which speaks specifically to changes within the justice systemⁱⁱ.

When social workers and police officers work collaboratively on mental health teams based within police departments or health settings such as mobile crisis services, rates of arrests, use of force and hospitalizations are decreasedⁱⁱⁱ. When we work together with community-based agencies, those struggling with mental health challenges experience fewer crises and more stability. Through improved intervention and use of resources, the cost of providing service is reduced while building strong relationships in the community.

The Manitoba College of Social Workers welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with police services and other community partners to establish a shared model of service to achieve our mutual goal of a safer, healthier Manitoba.

The College welcomes further discussion regarding this important issue. Please contact Barb Temmerman at 204-888-9477 or info@mcsw.ca.

Respectfully,



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Executive Director/Registrar



Vicki Verge Burgess, MSW, RSW
President

ⁱ Winnipeg Final Report, At Home/Chez Soi Project, Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2014, https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/At%252520Home%252520Report%252520Winnipeg%252520ENG_0.pdf, retrieved June 16, 2020

ⁱⁱ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf, retrieved June 17, 2020.

ⁱⁱⁱ Winnipeg Final Report, At Home/Chez Soi Project, Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2014, https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/At%252520Home%252520Report%252520Winnipeg%252520ENG_0.pdf, retrieved June 16, 2020

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