



March 1, 2023

Krista Ross, CEO, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce
John Wishart, CEO, Moncton Chamber of Commerce
David Duplisea, CEO, Saint John Chamber of Commerce

c/o advocacy@frederictonchamber.ca

Thank you for your correspondence dated November 29, 2022, concerning the coordination of municipal and provincial government addiction and mental health strategies to support communities, and in particular, those experiencing homelessness. I am also troubled by these issues. I appreciate your interest to help provide solutions. These issues are complex and multi layered. Solutions will need to focus on the unique needs of different communities and individuals across New Brunswick.

I recognize several community initiatives that are on the ground and working hard to make improvements. For example, the Moncton Task Force on Homelessness and Downtown Security and the Greater Moncton Homelessness Steering Committee are making progress. Moncton and Saint John have both recently announced out of the cold shelters. Other shelters and existing services are working collaboratively to provide a more coordinated approach. Together, initiatives like these, are all providing small successes that our government can build upon.

The Addictions and Mental Health branch within the Department of Health is continuously working with the Department of Social Development, Justice and Public Safety, the regional health authorities (Horizon and Vitalité Health Networks) and municipal governments and employees in a coordinated approach across the province to support those impacted by homelessness, and mental health and addiction issues.

The *Inter-Departmental Addiction and Mental Health Action Plan 2021-2015* is a five-year action plan aimed at addressing the increasing demand for addiction and mental health services. This plan recognized that these efforts will need support from communities across the province. These efforts take time and investment.

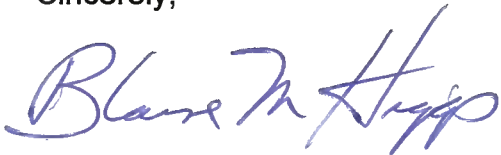


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I recognize many individuals, communities, organizations, and businesses are all doing what they can to assist. These efforts are essential, and they contribute to government's initiatives to help those in our communities who are experiencing significant vulnerabilities in housing, addictions and mental health challenges. I sincerely value your participation and ideas.

Thank you for sharing these important concerns and your suggestions with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Blaine M. Higgs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "B".

Blaine M. Higgs