



For Immediate Release
May 29, 2018

Election Day in Ontario: Increased need for social service supports in the District of Kenora

On June 7th, the District of Kenora will go to the polls to help determine the 42nd Parliament of Ontario. For families who access social assistance services, live in poverty and need affordable housing, key election issues are very different as compared to those who do not. The Kenora District Services Board (KDSB) would like to draw attention to the unique needs and challenges that influence many lives in our region.

Health inequity issues such as income, social status, gender, education, as well as the physical environment, including location and housing are prevalent and have significant impacts in our region. Vulnerable families may find the following platform issues that the KDSB provides as services, critical to their independence: income and employment security; appropriate child care services; adequate emergency medical services; homelessness prevention and; safe, affordable housing options.

“Over half of all Emergency Medical Services Calls responded to by the KDSB are for patients under the ages of 44 years old. We need to focus on prevention,” stated Henry Wall, Chief Administrative Officer of the KDSB. “Access to jobs, readily available support services, education and an increase in affordable housing is what we need to improve the health of our families and improve the prosperity of our communities.”

The KDSB has the mandate to provide effective and efficient district-wide services that help remove barriers and allow people to live to their full potential. Many forward-thinking projects are being developed such as a 24/7 emergency shelter in Kenora, district-wide child care space expansion, energy-efficient renovations in select housing inventory, development of new supportive housing and affordable housing units and additional Emergency Medical Services support throughout the region.

... Page 2



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Page 2

In the immediate future, there is still much more work to be done together with the Ontario government. In particular, a continued and enhanced focus is required for the growth, operation and sustainability of affordable housing options in our district that are in line with the KDSB's [Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan](#). Currently, KDSB's housing inventory in communities and locations that have high waitlists are not adequate to support its residents in providing suitable and timely housing. There is an urgent need to ensure that homeless or vulnerable people and families have access to housing and support services to achieve independence as quickly as possible.

“Without investing in the development of more housing, seniors will continue to struggle to find suitable housing and families will continue to struggle in poverty due to the lack of affordable housing,” stated Barry Baltessen, Chair of the KDSB Board of Directors. “A vital part to ensure the increase in economic growth in this region is for Ontario to have a government that recognizes the unique needs of Northern Ontario and is willing to address these needs.”

Each vote from the District of Kenora plays an influential role in creating a government that understands our unique needs and challenges. More assistance is needed to decrease health equity barriers, and increase the support provided to individuals and community well-being. Canadian citizens who reside in Ontario, and are at least 18 years of age on Election Day, are eligible and urged to vote. Ontario electors can find a list of acceptable identification documents and information about when and where to vote on www.elections.on.ca.

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