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To: Emily Lutz
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AMO Policy Update - Encampments and Opioid Crisis

Comprehensive Provincial Approach Needed to Make Tangible Progress on Homeless Encampments and the Opioid Crisis

Municipalities across Ontario understand the need for urgent action to address both the rising number of homeless encampments and the opioid crisis. There are more than 1400 encampments across the province. We can do better for our most vulnerable Ontarians and our broader communities.

Decades of isolated policy decisions made by successive provincial governments have compounded problems. More people are facing income insecurity. Health care and mental health demands are not being met. Help with addiction is hard to get. Affordable housing is desperately needed everywhere.

We need provincial action that is going to help the Ontarians who are struggling today and also tackle the root causes of homelessness so the crisis does not continue to grow.

Earlier this year, AMO released two policy papers calling for provincial action on the opioid crisis and homeless encampments. AMO engaged with municipal members, police, paramedics, and mental health and addictions and housing experts over the course of months to identify the suite of actions needed.

This is a complex problem that won't be solved by simple, short-term solutions. We need a comprehensive approach, including:

- Provincial guidance that supports an appropriate and consistent approach to encampments across the province;
- Improvements to the income security system that leave too many living in poverty, and more than 1 million people in Ontario using food banks last year;
- Significant investments in deeply affordable housing and supportive housing;
- Long-term, sustainable, and substantial investment in prevention programs;
- Expanding access to voluntary and evidence-based treatment with same-day access and scaling up 24/7 crisis centres; and,
- Ensuring local say on the harm reduction approaches needed within local communities.

The current Ontario government did not create this crisis, but it has the resources and the wherewithal to take the comprehensive actions needed to solve it. Municipalities are ready to work together with the provincial government to tackle this systemic problem.

This policy update is also available on [AMO's Website](#).

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