

## SOCIAL SERVICES

**If you want a healthier society, invest in social services. The social services and outreach done by Catholic Charities' member agencies and other faith-based and not-for-profit agencies provide vital services to the community, yet generally receive insufficient funding from the province for the administration and implementation of programs.**

It clearly makes no sense to underfund agencies providing vital services. Family poverty and unemployment are two main factors that Catholic Charities' member agencies contend with every day. Both require annual increases in funding to improve and extend outreach and support services. As the need grows, so should the funding. Catholic Charities often provides the funding needed to administer these programs, meet program goals and objectives, and to ensure further provincial funding

In addition, the salaries for not-for-profit agencies like those of member agencies of Catholic Charities are comparatively lower than other sectors, because they are not funded at the same rate as, for example, health or education social workers, despite doing the same work (and often work more intensely clinically).

The importance of the work done by not-for-profit and faith-based social services should be clear to all candidates in this election. It would be important to learn what value a candidate places on the work of not-for-profit and faith-based social services.

The work being done by Catholic Charities member agencies is critically important. The positive social return on 'investing' in their outreach in communities across Ontario is invaluable. Candidates should be aware of this and ensure increased provincial funding for these agencies to reach more people.

**Prescription for a healthier population: spend more on social services. A one-cent increase in social spending for every dollar spent on health care increases life expectancy and cuts premature death.** "Effect of provincial spending on social services and health care on health outcomes,"

January 2018<sup>9</sup>

At a time when close to 40% of provincial budgets are spent on health care, shifting even a small amount of that money to social programs such as social housing, welfare or child care, would reap significant health benefits. If provincial government spent just one cent more on social services per dollar spent on health, life expectancy would increase an additional 5% and potentially avoidable mortality would decrease by an additional 3% in one year.<sup>10</sup>

Although efforts have been made to improve the supports that make up the province's 'social safety net', the current system still fails too many who are left marginalized, living day to day in precarious situations. Without the actions of social service agencies like these, the negative social impact on vulnerable families, children and individuals – indeed to all of us – would be much greater.

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<sup>9</sup> "Effect of provincial spending on social services and health care on health outcomes in Canada: an observational longitudinal study," Daniel J. Dutton, Pierre-Gerlier Forest, Ronald D. Kneebone and Jennifer D. Zwicker, Canadian Medical Association Journal [CMAJ] January 22, 2018 10 Op. cit., "Effect of provincial spending..." Dutton et al.