



## News Release

### **Rural Municipal Leaders Support 'Solve the Crisis' Campaign to Address Homelessness and Mental Health**

Sunday, August 18, 2024

**City of Ottawa** - Representing 230 municipalities and over 2.6 million people across Ontario, the [Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus](#), [Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus](#), , and Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus join the call to action around the ['Solve the Crisis' Campaign](#), led by the [Ontario Big City Mayors](#).

During their joint meeting at the start of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 125<sup>th</sup> Conference, the three caucuses are stating their collective support around the need for the Ontario and Federal Governments to take immediate and targeted action to help solve the crisis around homelessness and mental health.

There is a homelessness and mental health crisis happening on streets across our communities, small and big, rural and urban. Municipalities continue to step up, but do not have the tools, expertise or capacity to fully address the intersectional and complex issues around housing, homelessness, health care, and social services.

We appreciate the actions that both the Federal and Ontario Governments have taken to-date including Ontario's Roadmap to Wellness, the creation of the Homelessness Prevention Program, and investing in youth wellness hubs. But we need to do more to 'Solve the Crisis' together as government partners, and we need to act swiftly.

As municipalities continue to raise, the rising number of homeless encampments and the human toll of the opioid crisis are a symptom of deeper system failures that hurt Ontario's overall social and economic prosperity. The WOWC, EOMC, and EOWC will be sending a letter to Premier

Ford to further underscore the need for a [Social and Economic Prosperity Review](#). We need a municipal fiscal relationship that supports the foundations of a strong economy, sustainable communities and quality of life that reflects modern day and front-line realities.

Organizations and Ontarians can join the call to support the 'Solve the Crisis' campaign by visiting [www.solveethecrisis.ca](http://www.solveethecrisis.ca).

## Quotes

"As Chair of the WOWC, I see the impacts first-hand around the homelessness and mental health crisis. Municipalities have been working tirelessly on the front-lines to address complex issues. We want to build safe, health communities and the only way to do so is to work together. Let's step up and 'Solve the Crisis' together." – **WOWC Chair, Glen McNeil, Warden of Huron County**

"In communities of all sizes, not just big cities, people are unhoused, suffering and dying. We need to help them and municipalities do not have the financial tools and resources to do it alone. It is time to take action to 'Solve The Crisis' together with municipalities, the Ontario Government, the Federal Government, and community partners at the table." – **EOWC Chair, Peter Emon, Warden of Renfrew County**

"This is something we (the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus) have been pursuing, over the last year: the need for substantial investment by both the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada, to deal with this unprecedented humanitarian crisis that all municipalities are now facing." – **EOMC Chair, Jeff Leal, Mayor of the City of Peterborough**

## About our organizations

### [Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus](#)

The Western Ontario Wardens Caucus Inc. (WOWC) serves as a unified voice for the 15 upper and single tier municipalities in Southwestern Ontario, advocating for their collective interest. Through collaborative efforts, WOWC works to address the unique challenges faced by rural and small urban

communities, playing a pivotal role in shaping policies and initiatives that positively impact the region's 1.6 million residents.

### [Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus](#)

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Inc. (EOWC) is a non-profit organization advocating for 103 small urban and rural municipalities across Eastern Ontario. The EOWC covers an area of 50,000 square kilometres, serving 800,000 residents. For more than 20 years, the EOWC has gained support by speaking with a united voice to champion regional municipal priorities and work with the government, businesses, non-profit organizations, Indigenous leaders, the media, and the public.

### [The Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus](#)

The Eastern Ontario Mayor's Caucus (EOMC) is comprised of ten Eastern Ontario municipalities that advocate for the region's needs and priorities, especially in the areas of health care, infrastructure, and economic development. The caucus works collaboratively with other levels of government, health care providers, community organizations, and interest holders to address the challenges and opportunities facing Eastern Ontario.

### [Ontario Big City Mayors](#)

Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) is an organization that includes mayors of 29 single and lower-tier cities with a population of 100,000 or more, who collectively represent nearly 70 percent of Ontario's population. OBCM advocates for issues and policies important to Ontario's largest cities.

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