



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

April 12, 2018

Social workers express thoughts over recent budget

Although the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (SASW) is pleased that the government has taken steps to increase funding for essential mental health services, the association is concerned about the impact of phasing out of the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement and the level of funding provided to post-secondary institutions.

“Our association is disappointed with the decision to phase out the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement prior to the implementation of the Canada Housing Benefit expected in 2020. The supplement provides a necessary support for those with lower incomes to live in quality housing that is affordable. Our members work with many vulnerable families and individuals and can attest to the difficulties that this decision will create,” said SASW President Ryan Labatt.

The SASW also stresses that the provincial government should increase the provincial mental health budget to 7% of the total overall health budget as soon as possible. The current funding level is approximately 5%.

He also noted that the reduction in funding for post-secondary students through scholarships and student loans will discourage students from seeking careers in social work at a time of increasing demand for service. SASW supports social work students who are voicing their concerns in accessing classes from the Faculty of Social Work, Saskatoon Campus.

“SASW strongly encourages the Government of Saskatchewan to ensure funding levels are adequate to support programs and students who are working toward their future careers,” said Labatt.

Despite these issues, Labatt said there was positive news in the budget that will assist the critical work that social workers provide to Saskatchewan residents. Social workers provide essential mental health services across the province and the increase in funding for mental health programming is welcomed

SASW represents more than 1,800 social workers in the province.

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