



**Housing Committee**  
La Ronge Health Centre

August 25, 2010

**Present:**

Dr. Monika Dutt (Deputy Medical Health Officer, Population Health Unit)  
Mark Williment (superintendent, Northern Lights School Division)  
Rebecca Galloway (Program Manager, KidsFirst North)  
Tim Keller (Manager, Sask Housing)  
Diane Manegre (Project Development Officer, Sask Housing)  
Tamara McKay (Project Officer, Homelessness Partnering Strategy)  
Jackie Hakes (Manager of Health Promotion Services, Mamawetan Churchill River Health Region)  
Donna Jamieson (Manager, North East Regional Housing Authority)  
Doreen Docken (Manager, Beaver River Regional Housing Authority)  
Tony Bunz (CEO, New North)  
Dr. James Irvine (Medical Health Officer, Population Health Unit)  
Bryce Graham (Manager of Environmental Health, Population Health Unit)  
Karen Eckhart (Coordinator, Northern Human Services Partnership)

**Regrets:**

PAGC

1. Roundtable introductions were done; Monika chaired the meeting.
2. There were no additions to the agenda.
3. We are meeting today because housing is an issue that comes up at many tables, including the NHSP. It has been a while since there have been meetings to discuss housing issues and options in northern SK. Access to housing, and affordability of housing are two of the recurrent themes in other meetings. Work in housing needs to be simultaneously north-wide and community-specific.  
Reports such as the one that will be developed with the hiring of the researcher really help to advocate for further funding.
4. We applied for, and received, a grant from CMHC to collect housing-related data in northern SK. The grant also specifies a workshop, and collection of best practices.

**Ideas to guide research:**

- Cost, access, ownership, crowding
- Special needs
- Policies (including how to move a long-term commitment forward)

- The Premier's letter to Social Services (the mandate letter) includes mention of additional social housing in the province

5. Current housing initiatives:

**SK Housing** – has 8 regions in northern SK (4 of these have regional housing authorities). Their mandate is social and affordable housing; they also look after staff housing for ministries. The framework is independent living. They partner with third parties or other ministries to build the housing stock. There are 1500 rental units and 100 staff units in the NAD, with few vacancies. Their work is off reserve. They also provide building inspections. They work with the housing authorities on community education, such as the pilot in Sandy Bay and La Loche on Health Homes. They also do contractor workshops. Rent is geared to income (25 to 29% of gross income, with exclusions as laid out in their Act; people need to apply for each support individually). They offer repair assistance to individuals through a variety of programs. They also assist with home ownership through the Rent to Purchase and Remote Housing programs. They focus their efforts on communities most in need.

**Population Health Unit** – investigates complaints and does plumbing inspections. They work with the housing authorities to resolve problems.

**Homelessness Partnering Strategy (with Service Canada)** – looking to end homelessness. Currently working in La Loche and Wollaston Lake, but have worked in a number of other northern communities. Their capital is aimed at emergency and second stage housing. Can partner with other agencies. Funding depends on community plans; city plans are updated every three years.

6. Housing priorities:

- lack of housing, overcrowding, conditions are poor in all communities, but noted in Stony Rapids.
- Building code issues and enforcements
- Design and compatibility with northern climate (including issues of ventilation and humidity)
- Maintenance, repairs and tenant knowledge
- Issues of ownership – accepting responsibility for maintenance; title transference (may not know who owns home); no taxes are collected
- Transient use of homes
- Overcrowding (intergenerational, leading to other social problems)
- Sewer backups and the disruption caused to other agencies, especially in Sandy Bay
- Difficult to find contractors, and keep things running. This could use further discussion
- Need for second-stage housing and other forms of supportive housing, including long-term care and assisted care needs, also noted need for emergency housing (youth)
- People with disabilities need supports

- Recognition that lack of adequate housing stock affects recruitment and retention for ministries and organizations
- Require a balance between north-wide and regional / community needs
- Census provided data on overcrowding and housing in need of repair
- Municipal Affairs has lots of information on housing
- Need creative approaches to developing affordable housing stock
- Discrepancies between the ways SAP and TEA work means much larger expenses for people on TEA; the result is that overcrowding means people can survive
- Province-wide policies do not work in northern SK
- Partnerships and connections at several levels are key
- Everyone deals with housing off the side of their desk. National Homelessness Partnership is funding housing coordinators in Prince Albert on a trial basis. These coordinators are also advocates.
- Grants are onerous and time consuming.
- Reimbursement processes are a problem because people often don't have the money up front
- Policy issues around programs need streamlining (TEA and RAP are not fitting well together)
- Many people cancel their various funding applications because they are too much of a hassle

#### 7. Initiatives:

- Northern Lights School Division and Housing have partnered to have students build houses in four communities. The other high schools need to have shop teachers and other resources in place before program can expand.
- The Healthy Homes Program was developed with the NorthEast Regional Housing Authority. This educational program is a series of classes on heating and ventilation, plumbing, finance, nutrition, caring for children, pests, fire. They have had mixed success in a workshop format, and are now running them in their offices one-on-one. Use local radio to also provide education.
- NorthEast Regional Housing Authority has a partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute to train 14 youth contracts as part of their commitment to local solutions
- Housing did a report in 2008; this report does not have much information relevant to northern SK
- The Regional Housing Authorities' staff have been trained in RAP and assisting people to apply

#### Discussion:

- Will this committee extend to working with government to amend policy? This is a good discussion to have; the report will likely feed these ideas.
- Consider the communications plan throughout the process: develop housing committee; research and write report and recommendations; workshop in late October
- Look at 2008 MOU between province, First Nations re health disparities as an example of interjurisdictional work
- Include training and apprenticeship as part of the discussions

#### **8. North-wide Forum on Housing**

- See value in the meeting
- The coordinator can assist in planning
- Northern leaders are passionate about housing
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#### **Actions:**

- Invite representative from Municipal Affairs, Social Services to next meeting
- Next meeting: set through email