

DRAFT

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Issue: Lack of adequate funding for beds and appropriate resources within women's shelters across Canada. There is a continued gap in service for families accessing services in that a considerable amount of women and children are being turned away from shelters each day. Shelters are an integral service in all municipalities across the country and should be equipped to address the needs of their clients.

Reasons:

Whereas, according to a 2012 Statistics Canada Report, full capacity was the most common reason for turning women and children away from shelters. On the snapshot date of the study, April 18th, 2012, 74% of women accessing shelters were attempting to flee an abusive situation, whether it is emotional, physical, or sexual. On that same day 13% of departing women reported that they were returning to their spouse or common law partner. This is appalling given that these same women were trying to flee an abusive situation when accessing shelter services. The remainder of women who departed reported finding other accommodations either on their own or with family and friends. It may be presumed that these situations would be temporary and, ultimately, these women would return to an abusive situation.

Whereas, The Canadian Networks of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses survey from April 2015 indicates that on one day, 231 shelters across Canada welcomed 122 new women and 81 new children. On that same day, 302 women and 221 children had to be turned away due to inadequate access to resources.

Whereas, The Statistics Canada report indicated that complex mental and health and addiction issues were also factors in turning women away when accessing shelter services. The Shelter Voices Survey of 2015 shows this continued gap in service for families accessing support through shelters. Fewer than 20% of

shelters felt equipped to address the mental health concerns of women in their service and just 31% felt adequately equipped to address the addiction needs.

Therefore be it resolved that the Women Inspiring Women Branch of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario request the implementation of more funding for resources in shelters across Canada. This would increase capacity for intake into emergency shelters so that fewer women and children will be turned away. Further, we request that more funding be made available to build the capacity of shelter staff so that they may be able to adequately address the needs of their clients. This would include access to detox, addiction treatment, and appropriate mental health care.

Secretary

Advocacy Coordinator

Date

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