

## High Cost of Inaction

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- It costs taxpayers more than \$50,000 per year to support each homeless resident in British Columbia.<sup>1</sup>
- With a homeless population growth factor estimated at 30 per cent, compounded for each year of inadequate housing stock and supports, Victoria's homeless population could double by 2010.
- The Victoria Police Department has identified a group of 324 homeless residents—many of whom are mentally ill and suffer from substance use problems or a dual diagnosis—who are responsible for 23,033 police encounters over a period of 40 months, at a cost of \$9.2 million to the City of Victoria.<sup>2</sup>
- The City of Victoria has spent over \$1.4 million already this year in expenditures associated with homelessness; including clean-up costs, needle pick-up, damages to sensitive ecosystems, security and responses to complaints.
- Without proper access to health services, homeless residents rely on emergency and acute care health services—66 per cent of all homeless residents admitted to hospital by Vancouver Island Health Authority have a mental health or substance use related condition.
- The Task Force found that there are over 200 organizations in the Greater Victoria area currently engaged in addressing the needs of homeless, addicted and/or mentally ill people in our community. Over 20 funding agencies already spend an estimated \$76 million annually on housing, mental health and addiction services. By not addressing the needs of the homeless population in Greater Victoria, we are spending at least \$62 million in other services, such as policing, prisons, hospital services, emergency shelter, clean up, etc.
- A study conducted by the province of B.C. in 2001 showed that the cost of service use under the status quo was 33 per cent higher than the cost of housing and supporting individuals.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Draft report by CARMHA, Housing and Support for Adults with Severe Addictions and/or Mental Illness in British Columbia.

<sup>2</sup> Victoria Police Department, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> The Cost of Homelessness in BC, February 2001. A study conducted by the province of B.C.