



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 13, 2020

24 HOUR – COVID-19 RESPONSIVE EMERGENCY HOMELESS SUPPORT SHELTER MOVES TO PETE PALANGIO ARENA

North Bay, ON – The 24 hour COVID-19 Responsive Emergency Homelessness Shelter, currently located at the YMCA on Chippewa Street in North Bay will be moving to the Pete Palangio Arena on Wallace Road on Thursday, April 16th, as the need for shelter has already outgrown the space.

The shelter at the YMCA reached capacity several days and nights since it opened on April 1st. The move to the Pete Palangio site will provide more space and the double rink permits an isolation area for anyone attending the centre that is diagnosed as COVID-19 positive. While the YMCA site had the opportunity for isolation of a small number who were suspected of COVID-19, the space does not enable isolation of COVID-19 positive individuals.

“We’re grateful to the YMCA and the neighbouring community for their immediate support of this vital shelter,” says District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board DNSSAB Chair, Mark King. “As the situation evolves, more space is needed and the new site will better accommodate the potential and evolving need,” he adds.

The DNSSAB, Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services (NMHHSS), the City of North Bay, and the Nipissing District Housing Corporation (NDHC) continue to collaborate to ensure the most vulnerable of the community will continue to receive 24/7 shelter and care.

“We are working hard to keep staff, clients and our community safe though this pandemic,” Mary Davis, Executive Director of NMHHSS stated. “Social distancing can be challenging for everyone, but it is even more difficult for those who experience homelessness, addictions or mental health challenges. We couldn’t be more appreciative of the YMCA’s leadership and for recognising the importance of coming together as a community throughout these difficult times.”

The emergency shelter at the YMCA provided space for 35 cots and five staff, including security personnel. The new space will allow for 50 cots in the shelter side of the arena and 10 cots in the isolation side. As well, access to bathrooms and showers will be available to those who attend.

“The seriousness of the pandemic and the safety of the entire community continue to require quick and flexible responses. We feel the double rink arena provides the best option given the need for expediency,” says NDHC Chair, Dave Mendicino.

Further updates are posted regularly on the DNSSAB website at www.dnssab.ca