

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 8, 2024

## TEMPORARY COLD WEATHER PROGRAM OPENS FOR WINTER

### *More than just shelter from the cold*

**North Bay, ON:** A temporary Cold Weather Housing Response Program (CWHRP) is opening at the current site of Northern Pines at 590 Chippewa Street for the upcoming winter season. More than just a warming centre, the CWHRP, operated by the Crisis Centre North Bay, offers access to bathrooms and showers, laundry, food, and shelter during the cold winter months while keeping vulnerable individuals out of the elements. In addition to these basic necessities, the temporary program will provide daytime shelter that will help individuals experiencing homelessness access the community services available to them and offer a wide variety of on-site services to assist individuals throughout the day. Crisis stabilization and housing access will be the primary focus of these services. Key partners such as the North Bay Regional Health Centre and Community Paramedicine are already delivering on-site services, which is improving health and social outcomes.

The Crisis Centre has been holding town hall meetings with shelter clients, emphasizing the program rules and expected behaviours. You may notice security staff in front of Northern Pines and on Chippewa Street, as they are now present 24/7. In addition, highly visible physical signage is being added to key locations to remind clients of areas to avoid. The City of North Bay Police have been asked to assign additional officers, when possible, to the area to support safety.

The Community Paramedicine program has started its work out of Northern Pines. The program provides primary care and can be a gateway to conversations about longer-term solutions for individuals who need support. This service will be complemented by the North Bay Regional Health Centre's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) program, providing recovery-oriented mental health service for people with serious mental illness and a Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinic, specializing in addiction treatment at Northern Pines.

"Simply providing shelter from the cold to the vulnerable in our community is not enough," says DNSSAB Chair, Mark King. "The addition of the extra services and the focus on stabilizing people in crisis with the support they need will benefit the whole community, and we are very fortunate to have Crisis Centre North Bay, with their vast experience, operate the program."

"As temperatures turn colder, the safety and well-being of our community's most vulnerable have to be a top priority," says Crisis Centre Board Chair Kathleen Hallett. "Crisis Centre is providing a safe, warm space with on-site services to address health and housing for those who are homeless. We are fortunate to have committed community partners to work with as we get through what is said to be a cold winter. Our doors will be open, and we encourage anyone homeless or facing an unsafe living situation to take advantage of the resources."

In the meantime, the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB), in collaboration with the City of North Bay, Crisis Centre North Bay, and other partners, is actively seeking a permanent location for a 24/7 Integrated Shelter and Housing Hub. Further, the DNSSAB recently signed a resolution to support Ontario's big city mayors' Solve the Crisis campaign. They have identified that a homelessness and mental health crisis is happening on Ontario Streets. <https://solvethecrisis.ca/>

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