

## Federal Funding Boosts St. Thomas & Elgin County's Response to the Opioid Crisis

We are pleased to announce that the City of St. Thomas will receive a federal investment in the amount of \$640,326 over two years through Health Canada's Emergency Treatment Fund to strengthen local responses to opioid-related harms in St. Thomas and Elgin County. In addition to the City of St. Thomas, a collaborative network of Elgin Ontario Health Team members, including The Inn Out of the Cold St. Thomas Elgin (The INN), Southwestern Public Health, St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital, Canadian Mental Health Association Thames Valley Addictions and Mental Health Services and Central Community Health Centre will provide leadership for this work.

This investment will support community-led initiatives that expand access to mental health, substance use, and addictions services, enhance local service capacity, and improve culturally safe support for those most affected.

More specifically, the funding will:

- Facilitate shelter site modifications at **The INN** to enhance its role as a service hub and expand outreach efforts to connect people to services.
- Provide training to local providers and peer supporters to offer "**one-at-a-time**" **counselling and brief action planning** for faster access to mental health and addictions counselling.
- Train local providers and peer supporters in **trauma-informed approaches** to support safer, more responsive care, and initiate a **Community of Practice** to move learning into action.
- Enhance local capacity for **culturally safe approaches to healing and wellness** for guests at The INN who identify as Indigenous.

### From Brian Elliot, Director, INN Out of the Cold St. Thomas Elgin

"The INN has become more than just a shelter — it's a place of safety, connection, and hope. This funding will allow us to expand our role as a service hub and better meet the complex needs of the people we serve. By creating space for integrated supports and culturally safe healing, we are taking an important step toward dignity and wellness for our guests."



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**From Mayor Joe Preston, City of St. Thomas**

"The opioid crisis is a challenge felt in every corner of our community. Today's investment demonstrates the power of working together across all levels of government and with local partners. These initiatives will not only strengthen services for those most affected but also help us build a healthier, more resilient community."

**From Deanna Huggett, Executive Director, Elgin Ontario Health Team**

"This investment will help us bring care and support closer to where people are, in ways that are safe, responsive, and grounded in community. By strengthening partnerships and working together, we are building a more connected system of care that responds to the realities of the opioid crisis and supports people on their path to healing."

Funding through the Emergency Treatment Fund is part of Health Canada's commitment to helping municipalities and Indigenous communities respond to urgent needs related to the overdose crisis. The Elgin Ontario Health Team is also supported by funding from the Government of Ontario.

For more information about the Elgin Ontario Health Team and its initiatives, visit <http://www.elginoht.ca>.

