

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

Contact:

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What: Homeless Day on the Hill; We will hear from people with lived experience, lawmakers, and policy experts.

Where: Minnesota State Capitol -- Press Room 181

When: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 | Press Conference at 12:00 pm

800+ Advocates Turn Out for Emergency Shelter and MFIP Cash Assistance

St. Paul, MN – There isn't one kind of housing that fits the needs of every Minnesotan. From a homeless veteran to a first-time homebuyer, we must address needs along the full continuum of housing. This year, MCH is advocating for a \$15Mil investment per biennium to the Emergency Services Program (ESP), and a \$200/mo increase to the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). Emergency Shelters are the starting point to gaining long-term stability, and MFIP is the state's welfare-to-work program which hasn't increased since 1986. Both of these items are on the full 2019-2020 Homes for All Legislative Agenda, which MCH fully supports and actively leads on as well.

"Homelessness/poverty in our area is not anonymous. People sometimes go to great lengths to hide the fact that they don't have a place to stay. If they ask for help, people might see them going to the motel that we use for motel vouchers. People they know may be volunteering at the food shelf. If someone is sleeping in their car, someone might notice. This is one of the reasons homelessness is not as visible in smaller communities. But just because we don't have people (often) sleeping on benches, etc...it doesn't mean homelessness doesn't exist here. It just looks different."

-- Angela Larson (Family Services Director) from United Community Action Partnership; Willmar, Minnesota

Homeless Day on the Hill will convene more than **800** individuals from across the state to advocate for quality housing solutions and economic security for our state's low-income parents. Our legislative agenda enjoys bipartisan support because home has no party. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle know that where we live impacts everything.

Minnesota's unsheltered population is spiking dangerously. Since 2014, the number of unsheltered Minnesotans has grown by more than 40%. **Sixty-three of 87 Minnesota counties do not have a fixed site shelter.** If we maintain the status quo, this dangerous trendline will continue. Encampments will become more frequent and the number of individuals sleeping outside in life threatening temperatures will continue to climb.

MFIP is a de facto unemployment insurance program which has not seen an increase in 33 years. It is the most commonly accessed public program among homeless families, a population which has increased 4 times since 1991.

There will be a program at 9:00am - 10:00am at Central Presbyterian Church (500 Cedar St, St Paul, MN 55101) where Governor Walz will speak. There will be a hearing on March 13 following this press conference at 12:45pm in the State Office Building Room 200. The Homes for All Department of Human Services package, which includes increases to the Emergency Services Program, the Homeless Youth Act, Housing Supports, Long-Term Homeless Supportive Services, and Supportive Housing, will be heard with testimonies from individuals with lived experience.