



**Lions of Canada
Lions du Canada**

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming
Federal Budget**

**By: Allan Hunt
Past International Director
Lions of Canada**

- **Recommendation 1:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$6,400,000 for the Bridge Healing program.
- **Recommendation 2:** That the government provide funding in the amount of \$1,380,000 for the Lions Club Building emergency preparedness program.

Recommendation 1, the Bridge Healing program is an independent recovery initiative that provides immediate support to clients of the Health Care System. Currently, a facility operated by the Jasper Park Wellness Centre in Edmonton, Alberta, serves as an example. This location received funding from several organizations, including Lions Clubs and the Lions Club International Foundation.

- Bridge Healing aims to address the gap between individuals experiencing homelessness who are released from Emergency Departments without stable housing options, homeless shelters, or permanent residences. In this program, emergency patients experiencing homelessness are identified and given the option of immediate temporary housing as a step toward mental, physical, and social stability.
- Bridge Healing offers transitional housing intended to facilitate integrated support across multiple domains, addressing underlying causes of homelessness and improving quality of life for participants, with a goal of promoting permanent housing solutions.
- The program serves Emergency Department patients experiencing homelessness, including those from Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+, and recent immigrant communities, aiming to provide services in a respectful and effective manner.
- Social Impact: The program is designed to meet housing, food, medical, mental, and social needs for up to 288 homeless patients annually, based on 24 units being occupied for an average of 30 days each, with allowances made for cleaning and turnover, and estimating service to 20% of homeless patients visiting Emergency Departments in the first year, increasing to 70% over five years.
- Financial Impact: The program expects to reduce costs for healthcare organizations by decreasing repeated Emergency Department visits among homeless patients. Estimated savings are \$2,250,000 annually (1,500 visits at \$1,500 per visit).
- According to the Covenant St. Michaels Housing Association Demonstration Project – Brassard House Social Return on Investment Analysis (2016), the estimated social return on investment per homeless individual served was \$64,340 per year, resulting in a total cost reallocation of \$13,897,440 annually compared to the Bridge Healing program’s annual operating cost of \$597,160.
- Bridge Healing strives to reach individuals who may not benefit from other poverty-reduction programs. By linking various health and social supports with housing, the program intends to help stabilize those most impacted by homelessness and potentially reduce demand for Emergency Department services.
- Number of beneficiaries: With two buildings containing 12 rooms each, and each room projected to serve 12 individuals per year (one every 30 days), each building could serve 144 individuals annually. Across both buildings, the program estimates serving 288 guests per year.
- Cost: The capital cost for the Bridge Healing facility in Edmonton was \$5.2 million, with land acquisition at \$794,000 and annual operating expenses of \$597,000.

Recommendation 2, Lions Club Building Emergency Preparedness Program. Over 65 stand-alone buildings owned by Lions Clubs across Canada function as community gathering sites. During emergencies or natural disasters such as hurricanes, forest fires, or similar events, these facilities serve as places of refuge. Recognizing that power outages and water supply issues frequently occur during such events, the proposal recommends equipping each building with standby power capable of continuous operation for seven days. This would enable continued use of equipment for food preparation, shelter, and communications charging. A water filtration system would provide potable water for those inside and members of the local community. The proposed systems are similar to those installed in Canadian Embassies, with an estimated installation cost of \$20,000 per building.

For further clarification, please contact:

Allan J. Hunt
6972 Coach Lamp Drive
Chilliwack BC
V2R 2Y7
allanhunt47@gmail.com