



## **COVID Emergency Response Daytime Shelter Begins Transition to August 31 Closure**

**July 27, 2021** – Beginning the week of August 2, 2021, the Emergency COVID-19 Response Daytime Shelter, located at 435 North Railway St. SE, will begin transitioning to meet the revised closure date of August 31, 2021.

The Daytime Shelter will be closed Monday to Friday and will only open on Saturday and Sunday. In review of the Daytime Shelter and other services available in community, McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association and Medicine Hat Community Housing Society determined there is adequate service available for those individuals experiencing homelessness to access during weekday daytime hours.

The Daytime Shelter, contracted to McMan by the MHCHS, with funds received from the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada, was originally slated to close on September 30, 2021. However, when the province entered into Stage 3, Open for the Summer Plan, on July 1, 2021, it became evident with the easing of restrictions and the decline in positive COVID-19 case counts, the emergent need of daytime sheltering decreased.

“The Emergency Daytime Shelter has met the need of the vulnerable population since it first opened in December 2020,” says Jaime Rogers, Manager, Homeless & Housing Development Dept., MH Community Housing Society. “The Daytime Shelter was never intended to be a long-term solution for a daytime location and meaningful activity for those experiencing homelessness. This was a response to pandemic restrictions set out by Alberta Health and the Government of Alberta. MHCHS will pivot to expand current programs and develop new initiatives to keep our community’s most vulnerable safe and healthy for the long-term.”

The Daytime Shelter will remain open on the weekends from 7:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. Only those individuals who have used shelter the previous night or those who are known to be sleeping rough are able to access the Daytime Shelter. During the transition, staff will continue to provide a range of supports focusing on housing and recovery-based services and programming.

The move to open an emergency Daytime Shelter in response to Government of Alberta pandemic lockdowns has been met with controversy. First located downtown at 616 Third St. SE, the City Centre Development Agency (CCDA) filed an appeal in January on the permit that allowed the shelter to operate. The Subdivision and Development Appeal Board upheld the appeal forcing McMan to find an alternative location by March 31. McMan was able to secure 435 North Railway St. SE (formerly the Mustard Seed), however, the move required the approval by the municipal planning commission. Following the approval by MPC, the Daytime Shelter opened on May 7, 2021. Controversy continued when members of the North Flats Neighbourhood Association and businesses located along North Railway filed an appeal with the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB) that was heard on June 3, 2021. The SDAB denied the appeal to re-locate/close the Daytime Shelter.

### **Media Inquires:**

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