



Social Workers - Make a Difference

Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers

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MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers Stresses Need For Income Security Reforms in Saskatchewan

To mark International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on Friday, October 17, 2008, the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (SASW) is calling on all levels of government and interested stakeholders to work together to make this goal a reality.

“Despite Saskatchewan’s current economic boom, there is an increasing level of marginalization in society that everyone should be concerned about,” says Jim Walls, the President of SASW. “As social workers, we believe that economic security is a human right, and we believe that if all levels of government – municipal, provincial and federal – and interested stakeholder groups work together, we can eliminate poverty in Saskatchewan.”

The majority of social assistance recipients in Saskatchewan are people with disabilities and single parent households. Walls stresses that financial assistance and a supportive and compassionate approach is required to ensure these vulnerable members of society have their most basic needs met.

The Ministry of Social Services for the Government of Saskatchewan is currently working to modernize the province’s income security programs for low income individuals and families. SASW welcomes a review of the programs to better suit the needs of individuals and families across the province. In particular, the association would like to see the removal of contingencies, such as employment and job training, on a person’s ability to receive income security benefits.

“We believe that access to paid employment with decent pay, benefits and work conditions is a desirable goal for many of our clients,” says Walls. “But, we also believe that individuals should not have to accept compulsory work or job training requirements before they can receive adequate income security benefits.”

SASW has developed four guiding principles that it feels will result in income security reforms to benefit and improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in Saskatchewan. They are as follows:

- Professionals, governments, and community members must work together to ensure adequate economic security;
- Social assistance applicants must not be forced to find a job or participate in training programs as a condition of receiving support;
- Income support programs must be delivered by trained professionals who put the well-being of clients first and take their unique circumstances into account; and
- The administration of income security programs must always be delivered through public sector mechanisms and be accountable to the public interest.

For more information on SASW's guiding principles to income security reform, visit www.sasw.ca.

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