



## Community-based Social Services

The key to community health, wellness and equality

### ► Back to the negotiating table

Federal transfer payments to the provinces to fund post-secondary education and social services are made through the Canada Social Transfer (CST). ■ The concept of federal transfers to support provincial social services was implemented decades ago. Its purpose was to ensure the sharing and caring values of Canadians were well integrated into our country's overall prosperity. ■ Over the years, the formulation and administration of this transfer has been changed or modified but the values of striving for equality have always been at the root of this system. ■ This important block of funding is set to be re-negotiated in 2014 by the federal government and the Premiers. We need to ensure this transfer is protected, strengthened and made more accountable.

#### What public social services do for our communities

Community-based social services support people. Whether it's childcare services, programs for at-risk youth, housing and community support for people with disabilities, employment training, or any number of other community social services, this sector plays a vital role in creating and maintaining supportive, healthy, stable and caring communities.

Community-based social services help make our country more equitable. In these days of a growing gap between rich Canadians and the rest of us, quality social services are a great equalizer.

There is a clear link between poverty and poor health and convincing research has been done on the social determinates of mental and physical health.

Access to food, and a roof over one's head, help to keep the body healthy. Community activities and skills training help to keep the mind healthy. Respite care facilities are essential for caregivers to get a physical and mental break from demanding 24/7 care in many cases. These types of services and others contribute to wellness.

Community mental health services, that could help those that might otherwise end up in jail, are poorly funded and fragmented. In spite of this, the Harper government is still starving community social services, while building more federal prisons.

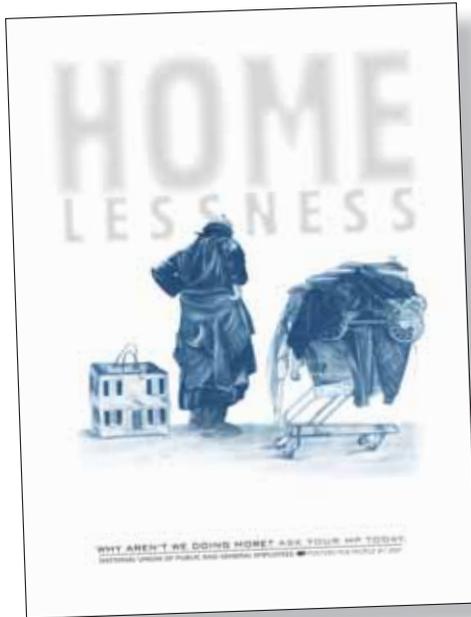
Strong social services mean healthier, happier and more equitable communities.

#### All of society is impacted when we lose important social services

In 1995, the federal government axed funding to the provinces and the CST was reduced by \$7 billion. Today, federal transfers for social services still lag behind 1992 levels.

The result has been that clients face long wait lists for support, group homes are closing, workers struggle with unsustainable workloads, and the list goes on.

Decades of underfunding have led to those most vulnerable in our communities going without important services. Whether it's support for developmentally delayed adults, at-risk children and youth, or those battling addictions, they aren't getting the support and care they need.



A patchwork of community-based services across the country, and within provinces, means that opportunity for support differs from place to place. A child in an urban centre may be able to access special services for a developmental disability, but a child in a rural or smaller town may not.

To compound the problem of uneven services, there is no significant accountability for where and how the provinces spend their Canada Social Transfer (CST) dollars.

#### **We CAN afford it!**

It's a matter of choices. Do we fund prisons and fighter jets or do we fund social programs that support the most vulnerable in our communities?

Since the mid-90s, all levels of government have spent billions of dollars on tax cuts for wealthy corporations and individuals. As

a result, they have reduced their revenue by \$90 billion every year. Those dollars could be spent on properly funding programs that care and support those in need.

A move towards tax fairness would provide additional revenue that would be more than enough to recover the funds lost in the mid-90s.

Tens of billions of dollars in offshore tax havens, subsidies to wealthy corporations and government spending on tax breaks for the banks and super-rich people are sources of revenue with which the government could properly fund social services.

#### **National standards**

NUPGE is calling for the federal government to negotiate with Premiers regarding the CST renewal in 2014.

It is essential that BOTH adequate long-term funding, and accountability for dollars transferred through the CST, are achieved in the 2014 negotiations; for the good of each and every community across Canada.

## Get Involved!

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### Send

- \* a letter to Harper and your Premier about negotiating a fair deal at <http://alltogethernow.nupge.ca/write-letter>

