

The Manitoba Public Health Association  
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November 8, 2021

City of Winnipeg  
510 Main St,  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3B 1B9

Dear Mayor Bowman and members of Executive Policy Council,

We, the Board of the Manitoba Public Health Association (MPHA), are writing to express our support of the City's first comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, in anticipation of the upcoming vote on November 17, 2021. The MPHA is a volunteer run, non-profit, non-governmental organization that advocates for social justice, reconciliation, and equity for the health of Manitobans. As such, we are awaiting with hopefulness your November 17 vote.

We know that there is a clear relationship between health and poverty. Decades of research has shown that poverty is one of the most powerful determinants of health, leading to increased risk of disease, premature mortality and disability. Life circumstances and the environments in which we live profoundly affect how much control we have in our lives. Poverty robs children of their life chances, compromises secure employment and safe working conditions for adults, and limits the opportunities for seniors to age as they wish. Low-income and stigma can exclude people from recreational opportunities, social networks and community life. Recent experience with the COVID pandemic has underscored how those living in poverty are disproportionately impacted by health threats.

Given all of the above, we encourage you to lead decisively and with courage and integrity. Your decision can markedly affect the health and wellbeing of the approximately 1 in 8 Winnipeggers living in poverty, as well as enhancing the vibrancy of the whole city.

We congratulate you for recognizing the importance of poverty and taking the steps that brought you to the upcoming vote. We hope you continue this visionary leadership to take bold action at a municipal level, while also advocating to all other levels of government.

Thank you for your commitment to the health and well-being of our entire community.

Sande Harlos, President,  
Manitoba Public Health Association Board