

## **Check Against Delivery**

### **Emergency Social Service Forum November 26, 2014, Edmonton Honourable Heather Klimchuk, Minister, Human Services**

Thank you for your kind introduction Donelda.

Good morning everyone.

It's an honour to be with you today as your Forum returns north to Edmonton.

I am pleased to bring greetings from the Premier and the Alberta Government as you launch into your agenda today.

I'd also like to bring greetings on behalf of my colleague Minister Diana McQueen.

Municipal Affairs and Human Services are proud to be sponsors of your annual event.

I was moved by your theme this year... On the Other Side of the Tape... People Helping People.

That should be the focus in any emergency... helping our neighbours... colleagues... and friends.

Working together to support each other as we get through difficult situations.

But coping in an emergency situation is also about sharing.

Sharing the work... sharing resources... sharing solutions.

That's what I find so very encouraging about the Emergency Social Services Network of Alberta... the very reason you exist is to share knowledge and resources.

From the fires in Slave Lake to flooding in the south... we've recently had some significant disasters in our province... but we've responded well... and learned much.

You share best practices and information... all with the goal of ensuring that every time there's an emergency... no matter where it happens... Albertans receive the services they need.

Human Services stands behind you in the good work that you do.

We are a champion in the development of the Provincial Emergency Services Framework.

The framework will help guide the delivery of social services when disasters and emergencies strike.

It will also help authorities at the local and regional level align with provincial and federal agencies.

Your annual forum is a fantastic opportunity for networking and professional development.

But even more than that... as your theme this year reflects... it's about putting yourselves in the shoes of people on the other side of the yellow tape.

In crisis situations... we traditionally think of the yellow tape as a barrier.

We may perceive it to be a division between first responders and the victims.

A victim doesn't stop being a victim after the initial crisis or disaster is over... you recognize the importance of ongoing support.

You've chosen to view that yellow tape as a critical transition point... between first responders and the first step towards recovery.

You're working behind the scenes and beyond the crisis to support individuals during the critical recovery process.

You're there to care for people and ensure their needs are met once flood waters have receded and fires have gone out.

You are making a conscious effort to not just meet the needs of your neighbours... but to put yourselves in their shoes to find ways to better meet their needs both during and after a crisis.

I'd like you to take a moment to give yourselves a round of applause for the great work you do...to ensure the members of your community will be cared for during crisis situations.

No matter where you are located in the province... you do great work in your local communities.

You are the unsung heroes who do this good work whenever you're needed... often without credit or recognition.

Your network is a shining example of how municipalities and other stakeholders can share ideas and best practices to ensure that next time... we'll be even better prepared.

Through your breakout sessions... you'll also be learning about some key partners who can support you.

I'm also here today to tell you that the Government of Alberta supports your efforts and recognizes the prompt and efficient delivery of emergency social services is a critical element of any crisis.

At the 2013 Disaster Forum... the Minister of Municipal Affairs announced the appointment of Human Services as the lead for the Provincial Emergency Social Services Framework.

As part of my mandate on behalf of Government... Human Services is committed to working collaboratively as we move the development of the framework forward.

With governments... communities... partners and stakeholders... with the ultimate goal of achieving better results for Albertans.

When a crisis or emergency occurs... we will work directly with those involved with the crisis... supporting municipalities as they implement local response plans and engage community resources.

From bringing families back together to managing volunteers to providing essential services... the Government of Alberta will be there for you.

We look to all of you as critical ambassadors who will reach across the yellow tape and help your friends and neighbours.

And by sharing your successes and best practices across the Network... you'll be helping all Albertans.

Thank you again for the invitation to be with you this morning.

My best wishes for a successful Forum filled with new learnings... new connections... and great success!