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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2019MAH0132-001745  
Sept. 10, 2019

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

### **Supportive housing shown to be making peoples' lives better**

VICTORIA – New reports show that government's supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness is substantially improving the quality of life for residents and reducing their use of emergency health services.

With this housing-first approach, people experiencing homelessness have access to housing, along with the wraparound services they need to build a better life.

"I am very pleased to see these outcomes, which confirm that we are on the right path in addressing homelessness in B.C.," said Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "We know that it is immensely challenging for people to move forward when they don't have housing. Our housing-first model works, giving people dignity and hope by helping them find and maintain stable homes, improving their quality of life and reducing their use of health and social services in the long term. Importantly, these homes are not only changing the residents' lives, but they are improving the overall health of their communities."

Led by BC Housing and in collaboration with the City of Vancouver, the City of Surrey and non-profit housing providers, the reports summarize data collected six months after the first seven modular supportive housing buildings opened in Vancouver and Surrey. Some of the key outcomes include:

- 94% of residents remain housed in their units after six months;
- 84% of residents report improvements in overall well-being;
- 82% of residents report experiencing positive interactions with neighbours;
- 56% of residents report improvement in their physical health;
- 44% of residents report they had been admitted to hospital less often;
- 44% of residents report improvements to their mental health; and
- 39% of residents report improvements to their addiction issues.

Many of the residents living in these modular buildings have been without stable housing for many years and are some of the most vulnerable people in the community. Supportive housing provides the stable foundation from which residents can begin to take positive steps, such as addressing health challenges and exploring work opportunities.

"These outcomes demonstrate the remarkable impact that having a home has for a person," said Kennedy Stewart, mayor of Vancouver. "Temporary modular housing has provided immediate relief for hundreds of people experiencing homelessness across our city, who now have a safe, warm place to sleep. We're grateful for our partnerships with BC Housing and the non-profit organizations who manage each building. These life-changing homes are only made possible through working together."

In the 20 other communities throughout the province where modular supportive housing has opened or is under construction, BC Housing will collaborate with the non-profit housing operators and support service agencies on similar evaluation for each of the buildings after they have been operational for at least six months.

“The key to solving homelessness is to provide stable housing options that will provide security and restore dignity to individuals,” said Doug McCallum, mayor of Surrey. “This report is proof that the modular supportive housing projects that have been put in place in Surrey and Vancouver are working. I want to thank BC Housing for its leadership and I look forward to working with them on future projects.”

“Since opening 161 units of modular housing in Surrey, Lookout has helped 183 individuals who had nowhere to live,” said Shayne Williams, executive director, Lookout Housing and Health Society. “Once housed, people are able to begin their journey towards personal wellness and housing stability. As one of our Surrey tenants described, ‘It’s such a feeling of joy to enter my clean and safe dwelling.’ It is an incredible experience that could not have happened without the strong partnership of the City of Surrey, BC Housing, RCMP, Fraser Health and Lookout.”

Once evaluations are complete, a final report will be compiled to summarize outcomes for people in supportive housing around the province. There are 13 modular supportive housing projects in progress and will be included in the provincewide report expected late next year.

Delivering affordable housing is a shared priority between government and the BC Green Party caucus and is part of the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- Through the Building BC: Rapid Response to Homelessness program, the Province is investing \$291 million to build over 2,000 homes throughout B.C. and more than \$170 million over three years for 24/7 staffing and support services.
- In just over two years, government has built over 1,840 supportive homes, with more than 700 underway and a goal of 4,700 over 10 years.

#### **Learn More:**

The full reports and a summary of the results can be found here:

<https://www.bchousing.org/modular-supportive-housing-resident-outcomes-reports>

A map showing the location of all announced projects is available online:

<https://www.bchousing.org/homes-for-BC>

To find out what the Province is doing to improve housing affordability, visit:

[news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/bc-government-addressing-housing-affordability-challenges](https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/bc-government-addressing-housing-affordability-challenges)

A backgrounder follows.

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## BACKGROUND

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### **Services, supports provided for modular housing**

All new modular supportive housing buildings in the province have around-the-clock staffing to help young people, people with disabilities, seniors and others in critical need of housing.

The Province is providing annual operating funding to help those with the highest housing needs build new beginnings. Experienced staff provide support to tenants, based on their assessed needs.

Services and supports provided to young people, seniors, people with disabilities and others who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, include:

- both on-site supports and connection to additional specialized supports in their community;
- supports that are tailored to the needs of the residents, including education and employment opportunities, and health and wellness services, including mental health and addiction treatment programs;
- individual or group support services, such as life skills, community information and social and recreational programs;
- meals;
- case planning and needs assessment;
- other supports designed to assist residents in meeting their personal and housing goals, including culturally specific programs;
- help accessing income assistance, pension benefits, disability benefits, obtaining a B.C. identification card or establishing a bank account;
- support for residents to learn how to operate and maintain a home; and
- no-cost laundry services, either on- or off-site.

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