

# City needs more affordable housing

February 17, 2011 | by Floyd Perras, for the [Winnipeg Sun](#)

In 1995, the federal government cut the social housing budget, and for nearly two decades there has been virtually no new affordable housing built.

Over the last 18 years, the provincial government increased shelter allowance for an individual by a whopping \$35, setting the total at \$285 per month. If you have ever tried finding an apartment in that price range, you know it's tough.

According to *Housing Vulnerability and Health: Canada's Hidden Emergency*, a study completed by many partners across Canada, there are 17,000 shelter beds nationwide and 400,000 people who would be considered homeless. Published just three months ago, the study also revealed that for every shelter bed in Canada, there are another 23 people who live with "housing vulnerability."

The study also looked at the health of people without a home. Whether they were temporarily staying with friends or family, or had a place of their own for a few months before losing it again, their health did not improve.

More than half — 52% — of the individuals studied reported a past diagnosis of a mental health problem, and one third reported chronic health conditions. Nearly 40% did not have access to proper health care because of their mental and physical disabilities.

These numbers are shocking; more than half of all homeless people in Canada are mentally ill and nearly half do not get the help they need because they are suffering from depression, bipolar disorder, or other post-traumatic disorders.

That means among the 1,600 Winnipeggers who use Siloam's shelter at any given time of the year, 800 might be mentally ill and 320 of them might not be receiving the support they need.

Faced with all these circumstances — lack of affordable housing, adequate allowance, proper health care, and proper meds — many people simply give up.

If we are going to gain ground, we must add housing with supports for these people; supportive housing because a reported half of them struggle with mental health issues.

[Click here](#) for the full article by Floyd Perras, Executive Director of the Siloam Mission

Posted on the [Winnipeg Rental Network](#)

