

Ontario Investing \$4.6 Million to Bolster Life-Saving Medical Isotope Production

The Ontario government is investing an additional \$4.6 million to increase production of cancer-fighting medical isotopes at the McMaster Nuclear Reactor. This builds on the government's \$18 million investment last year to expand operations at the reactor to 24 hours per day, seven days per week, creating good-paying jobs, accelerating innovative research and delivering cutting-edge treatments. As part of the government's plan to protect Ontario, leveraging the province's nuclear advantage will further position Ontario as a global leader in nuclear medicine innovation and build a more resilient economy in an increasingly competitive global market. "Cancer impacts us all, and Ontario is proudly leading the development of innovative solutions that save lives and make a meaningful difference for our loved ones," said Nolan Quinn, Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security. "This investment will ensure that Ontario families continue to have access to cutting-edge, homegrown treatments, while strengthening and protecting Ontario's position as a global leader in nuclear medicine." Today's announcement brings the Ontario government's total investment in the McMaster Nuclear Reactor to \$26.9 million, increasing medical isotope production and research capacity by 300 per cent to accelerate homegrown innovation in strategic areas such as radiopharmaceuticals, med-

ical isotopes, nuclear safety and security. As Canada's largest facility for nuclear research, the reactor will produce up to 84,000 treatments a year while supporting many good-paying jobs and providing access to world-class research space. "Through continued investment in the McMaster Nuclear Reactor, our government is reinforcing Ontario's leadership in medical isotope innovation and expanding access to life-saving treatments for patients at home and around the world," said Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. "As we continue to deliver on the goals outlined in our Life Sciences Strategy, today's announcement affirms the importance of cultivating a strong, STEM workforce and the positive impact Ontario's nuclear medicine advantage holds for the broader economy." With more than 247,000 Canadians diagnosed with cancer each year, and two of every five Canadians developing cancer during their lifetime, the demand for precision radiopharmaceuticals is increasing, and so is the need for large-scale production of key isotopes. To meet this demand, the government launched the Nuclear Isotope Innovation Council of Ontario (NIICO) last year, an expert advisory panel that is helping to leverage Ontario's world-class nuclear fleet to double the number of medical isotopes produced in the province by 2030. "With two in five Canadians

expected to be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, increasing the capacity of the McMaster Nuclear Reactor means increasing hope for patients," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Energy and Mines. "Ontario has a plan to double medical isotope production by 2030, with this investment expanding production capacity, accelerating world-class research and strengthening our position as a global leader in nuclear innovation. Our government is bringing life-saving diagnostics and treatments to more patients across Ontario and around the world." "We welcome these additional resources from the Province of Ontario, and we embrace the opportunity to use them to enhance our production of medical isotopes," said Susan Tighe, President and Vice Chancellor of McMaster University. "As we build on our tradition of nuclear innovation, we appreciate this affirmation that we are heading in the right direction." Supporting Ontario's isotope industry delivers on the government's promise made in Energy for Generations, as well as its life sciences strategy, Taking Life Sciences to the Next Level. The plan features the importance of exporting Ontario's nuclear expertise, supply chain and skilled workforce to help position the province as a global superpower by supplying life-saving materials to health-care systems worldwide.



Housing insecurity

By John Meloche

Municipal Candidate for Ward 2 in in Pickering

Housing insecurity in Pickering and across Durham is not a distant problem, and it is not limited to people sleeping outdoors. It affects workers, families, people recovering from illness, those escaping unsafe homes, and residents moving between couches, cars, temporary rooms, and shelters. I recently met with Margaret Eskin of DARS at her farm house to understand the organization's work. I expected to hear about homelessness. Instead, I heard a much broader story involving housing instability, mental health, addiction, trauma, illness, gaps in government services, and responsibility being carried by a small local organization. Margaret described people whose housing insecurity may not be obvious: workers, people couch surfing, and a teacher who came to a warming centre with her dog after cancer treatment left her unable to work or afford housing. Some people sleep during the day because it feels safer than sleeping at night. The public often sees only the most visible cases, including open drug use, untreated mental illness, theft, aggression, and legitimate concerns for businesses and residents. But moving someone from one doorway to another does not solve the underlying problem. DARS operates a transitional farm residence in Pickering that houses six people at a time. Approximately 18 people lived there during its first 18 months. Residents are expected to keep the home clean, spend productive time outside the residence, and complete volunteer work. Compassion does not require eliminating responsibility. Routine, accountability, and purpose can help restore dignity. The farm supports that process through gardening, animal care, food recovery, maintenance, and small-engine repair. Residents receive internet access and connections to employment, housing, and income supports. DARS uses head leases. The organization rents a home directly from a landlord and assumes the lease liability while residents build stability and prove they can maintain the property. The goal may eventually be to transfer the lease to the tenants without an unreasonable rent increase. This gives landlords an accountable partner while opening a door for people with poor credit, limited savings, or no recent rental history. DARS provides meals, showers, and outreach. Food is more than nourishment; it builds trust. Someone who avoids a government office may still come for lunch, creating an opportunity to connect them with housing, employment, treatment, or income support. These programs remain financially fragile. The transitional farm receives no direct operating support from Durham Region and relies on City support, grants, donors, fundraising, food partnerships, and volunteers. Proven housing programs should not survive solely on the ability of a small organization to continually raise money. One shelter cannot be the entire answer. Pickering needs a full housing continuum: emergency shelter, transitional housing, supportive and recovery housing, shared homes, head leases, treatment, rent supplements, and permanent affordable housing. Different people need different doors. Compassion and accountability are not opposites. Vulnerable people deserve dignity, treatment, housing pathways, and employment support. Residents and businesses also deserve safe, clean public spaces. Police cannot become the default social service, and non-profits cannot carry the entire burden. Many responsibilities belong to Durham Region and senior governments, but Pickering City Council is not powerless. The City can identify service gaps, support proven organizations, build partnerships, advocate for outreach, and demand measurable coordination between housing providers, police, health services, community agencies, and every level of government. DARS is already demonstrating practical local action. We should learn from it. Housing insecurity is already here.

DARS

DEDICATED ADVOCACY RESOURCE SUPPORT

Needs YOUR HELP!

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CUBE VAN

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GREAT... We need all the help we can get.

WE ACCEPT LEGACY GIFTS

Helping those who are experiencing HOUSING, INCOME & FOOD INSECURITY AND WHO RESIDE IN WEST DURHAM.

DARS is a volunteer-led community outreach initiative that aims to serve low-income families and individuals experiencing housing instability in **Pickering and Ajax.**

- ✓ Safe, inclusive space
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- ✓ Pantry staples & clothing
- ✓ Access to showers
- ✓ Help with housing & income applications

VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS WELCOME

(905) 492-9337 | **info@darsservices.ca**

Text Message Scam Asking For Payment Of Parking Tickets

It has come to the Town's attention that residents have received suspicious text messages asking for the payment of outstanding parking tickets. The Town of Whitby does not send text messages about parking violations or tickets. If you receive such messages, do not click on any links or provide personal information.

Riley Case: York Police clears officers, inquiry moves to LECA

Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) announced that its officers involved in a case of alleged misconduct with a lawyer, have been cleared in an independent investigation by York Regional Police (YRP). The matter has now been referred to the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA), which will independently assess whether any misconduct occurred, it said. "The incident occurred at the Superior Court of Justice in Oshawa on January 23. DRPS arrested and charged Ms. Sudine Riley under the Trespass to Property Act. Following the arrest, Ms. Riley alleged criminal wrongdoing by the officers involved," said the DRPS statement. "However the YRP investigation has now concluded that there were no reasonable grounds in the evidence to support criminal charges against any of the officers involved," it said. Pursuant to the Community Safety and Policing Act, the matter has now been referred to the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA), which will independently assess whether any misconduct occurred. DRPS has stated that it remains committed to transparency, accountability, and maintaining public confidence in policing and court security.

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