



Canada's Premiers are committed to a fair and inclusive society

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, July 26, 2013 - Premiers are committed to a fair and inclusive society where citizens have access to public services that support their well-being and help them contribute to the social and economic fabric of society.

Support for Persons with Disabilities

Premiers agreed on the importance of ensuring that all Canadians living with disabilities have the supports necessary to fully participate in the economic and social life of our communities. Premiers directed social service ministers to accelerate their work on disability systems supports and report back on options and recommendations.

Mental Health

Premiers recognized the challenges associated with mental illness and its effects on all sectors of society. They highlighted the importance of an integrated and coordinated approach to mental health services within each jurisdiction. Building on discussions at the 2012 Mental Health Summit held in Winnipeg, Premiers directed ministers responsible to host a meeting of private and public sector leaders on workplace mental health and wellness in 2013. Premiers also directed ministers to continue to develop best-practices for mental health promotion and mental illness prevention and identify how approaches, treatments and supports can be shared across jurisdictions to reach all individuals and communities, including in Aboriginal and remote regions.

Affordable and Social Housing

Premiers underscored the importance of access to affordable and social housing. They acknowledged that although measures are in place, these measures are insufficient. They called on the federal government to work with ministers of housing on a long-term federal funding commitment for housing, which would outline a comprehensive and sustainable strategy to effectively meet the country's diverse housing needs for both today and future generations. Québec's Premier indicated that her government intends to make its own representations to the federal government.

Retirement Income

Premiers discussed Canada's retirement income system and the importance of continued efforts to ensure tomorrow's seniors are able to retire with secure and adequate income. Premiers agreed on the need to consider options for enhancing the retirement income system including the Canada Pension Plan/Québec Pension Plan and the Pooled Registered Pension Plans. A modest, phased-in and fully funded expansion of CPP/QPP would increase retirement income for future retirees, and is consistent with efforts to improve labour mobility and enhance labour market efficiency. Premiers noted concern with the increase by the federal government of the age of eligibility for Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement from 65 to 67, as this will result in more Canadians requiring social assistance in order to meet a basic standard of living. Premiers noted the commitment by the federal government to compensate provinces and territories for any net additional costs and look forward to engaging the federal government on this issue.

Bullying and Cyber-bullying

Premiers condemn all forms of bullying. In particular, they are concerned about the impact that cyber-bullying is having on a generation of young people.

Premiers shared details on initiatives that all provinces and territories have undertaken to prevent bullying and cyber-bullying, strengthen mental health supports, provide support to victims and address gaps in our laws. Teachers, principals and school board officials have a critical role to play in helping children and youth understand the impact of their behaviors on others and empower young people to make good choices in all situations. Parents also play a pivotal role in enabling success at school by recognizing the warning signs of bullying, fostering resilience, and in teaching children good communication, social and coping skills at home.

Premiers are encouraged by the efforts of many young people, parents and educators across the country that are showing leadership by working hard to prevent bullying in their schools and communities. Premiers commend the work of Justice Ministers, Status of Women Ministers, and Education Ministers and educators across the country in their efforts to monitor the prevalence of bullying in schools, and in championing prevention and intervention efforts within school communities. They urged all partners to pursue collaborative relationships with the goal of learning from what is working well and where supports can be enhanced for educators, students, youth and their families.

The harm caused by the use of technology can be more pervasive than traditional forms of bullying. Cyber-bullying has far reaching implications for various areas of law including criminal, civil, constitutional and human rights. Premiers stand with Justice Ministers in their efforts to strengthen the Criminal Code by creating a new offence covering non-consensual distribution of intimate images and modernizing investigative powers for law enforcement. Premiers stressed the need for the speedy review of the recommendations in consultation with provinces and territories so they may be moved into legislation quickly.

- 30 -

Media enquiries may be directed to:

Premier's Media Office
Government of Ontario
(416) 314-8975