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**FOR  
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RELEASE**

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## **County of Renfrew selected to host Provincial Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub**

The County of Renfrew is proud to announce its selection by the Province of Ontario as a host for a new Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub. This initiative underscores the County's dedication to enhancing community safety and providing comprehensive support services to residents in need.

HART Hubs are designed to offer integrated services tailored to local community needs, focusing on individuals with complex service requirements, including those experiencing homelessness, substance use, and mental health challenges. The announcement includes \$6.3 million in annual funding, with \$1.3 million earmarked specifically for Mental Health and Addictions Supportive Housing beginning in 2025-26 (to 2027-28).

“We are honoured that the Province has entrusted the collaborative network of partners in Renfrew County with establishing a HART Hub, complete with the all-important wrap-around services,” said Renfrew County Warden Peter Emon. “This initiative will significantly bolster the efforts of all of the agencies engaged on the Mesa initiative to provide essential services to our most vulnerable populations, fostering a safer and more supportive community environment. The Mesa HART Hub is not a shiny toy adding to services in our community; it is a necessary driver of compassionate and planned care for our residents.”

The Warden added the community owes a great deal of gratitude to MPP John Yakabuski for his support for this application as he recognized the need and was relentless in his advocacy.

“I am pleased our government recognizes the need to establish HART Hubs in rural Ontario especially, in Renfrew County. Having access to these services will have a positive impact on the lives of many in our community,” said MPP John Yakabuski, who made the official funding announcement at the County Administration Building in Pembroke on January 28.

“Congratulations to the County of Renfrew and the PRH for pursuing funding for this much-needed Hub.”

The County's successful proposal was a collaborative effort involving key partners such as the Pembroke Regional Hospital, Carefor, the City of Pembroke, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, MacKay Manor, Addictions Treatment Service, Phoenix Centre for Children and Families, Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre (OATC) – Pembroke, Pathways Alcohol and Drug

Treatment Services, Renfrew County Youth Wellness Hub, The Grind Pembroke, Renfrew County and District Health Unit, Upper Ottawa Valley detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police, local municipalities, first responders, and various community organizations.

“We are committed to co-lead this initiative with the County of Renfrew,” stated Sabine Mersmann, President and CEO of Pembroke Regional Hospital. “The Mesa HART Hub will address housing stability and provide much needed increased capacity for mental health and substance use services. All key partners in this initiative have one focus – to increase community wellness by addressing both health and social determinants that affect our community members.”

The Renfrew County Mesa HART Hub will provide a range of services, including:

- Primary Care
- Mental Health Services
- Addiction Care and Support
- Social Services and Employment Support
- Supportive and Bridge Housing Services

These services aim to meet immediate needs and support long-term recovery and stability for individuals facing overlapping challenges.

“This achievement is a testament to the strong partnerships within our community,” remarked Chief Administrative Officer Craig Kelley. “Together, we are poised to deliver comprehensive services that address the multifaceted needs of our residents.”

The establishment of the Mesa HART Hub aligns with Ontario's broader strategy to prioritize community safety and focus on treatment and recovery services. The County of Renfrew and other partners have been lobbying the Province for such a facility. Through the work with the Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team and the Renfrew County and District Drug Strategy the community partners have proven the success of such a model with the ongoing efforts of Mesa, the region’s collaborative approach to compassionate care. Efforts already underway include bridge housing at the Carefor complex in Pembroke, the warming centre in Pembroke, and supportive living spaces in Renfrew. The steering committee is set to meet in the coming days to discuss the details of the funding and the phasing of the rollout of the Mesa HART hub.

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