

February 6, 2023

Mayor, Councillors
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and Councillors,

As physicians and leaders in the city's Emergency Departments (EDs) we strongly encourage you to vote in favour of the recommendations being brought to City Council on February 7, 2023 by the Board of Health, including the proposed motion that would allocate funding for expanding the number of 24-hour warming locations during the winter months and ensure that these services are low barrier and provide walk-in access.

The COVID-19 pandemic has both contributed to and exacerbated the crisis we are seeing on our city's streets. An increase in poverty, homelessness, mental illness, and substance use disorders has heightened pressure on our shelter system and our EDs. Every day our waiting rooms are filled with people who need care due to drug poisoning and overdoses, and injuries sustained from sleeping outside and in unsafe areas. Serious harms directly related to cold-weather conditions are preventable. We also see people in our EDs who do not need clinical care, but simply have nowhere warm to go. Therefore, it is crucial that the City expand the number of 24-hour warming locations during the winter months and ensure that these services are low barrier and provide walk-in access. We also support the Board of Health's recommendation to establish an expert working table to review and make recommendations on the intersection of homelessness and health. We are happy to offer our services to this table.

While respite spaces and warming locations are urgently needed, longer-term solutions to prevent and address homelessness are also required. We encourage the City to continue to work with other levels of government to rapidly develop more affordable, supportive housing. The Mayor's recent call to address the mental health crisis is much appreciated, and we are hopeful that a national dialogue will lead to a comprehensive system of supports and services across Toronto. We must all work together to address poverty, homelessness and mental illness in our city. We look forward to your support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Juveria Zaheer
Medical Head, Gerald Sheff and Shanitha Kachan Emergency Department, CAMH

Dr. Carolyn Snider
Chief, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Johannes von Vopelius-Feldt

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Sara Gray

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Garrick Mok

Deputy Chief, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Evelyn Dell

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine and Trauma Team Leader, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Taryn Lloyd

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine and Addiction Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Sahil Gupta

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine and Trauma Team Leader, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Jennifer Chu

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital; Assistant Program Director - University of Toronto Emergency Medicine Residency Program

Dr. [Jennifer Riley](#)

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Michelle Klaiman

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Amy Cheng

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Amy Gajaria

Staff Physician, Child, Youth, and Family Services, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health;
Associate Director, EDI Education and Training, Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto

Dr. Tanya Hauck

Staff Physician, Addictions Division, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Dr. Jason Fishman

Staff Physician, Inpatient and Emergency Department, CAMH

Dr. Brittany Poynter,

Staff Physician, Emergency Department and Bridging Service, CAMH

Dr. Tamara Milovic

Staff Physician, Inpatient, Emergency Department, and Bridging Service, CAMH

Dr. Vicky Stergiopoulos

Staff Physician, Emergency Department and Bridging Service, CAMH

Dr. Tracy Sarmiento

Staff Physician, Emergency Department and Bridging Service, CAMH

Dr. Chloe Leon

Staff Physician, Outpatient and Emergency Department, CAMH

Dr. Steve Lin

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Priyank Bhatnagar

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Jamie Riggs

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Fayad Al-Haimus

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Henry Ajzenberg

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Michael Mak

Psychiatrist, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Dr. Bruce Fage

Staff Physician, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Dr. Ashwin Pillai

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Sarah Schwartz

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Mazen El-Baba

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Jason Joannou

Staff Psychiatrist, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Dr. Jessica Kent

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. June Lam

Staff Physician, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Dr. Kate Dillon

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Marissa Lu

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Ian Beamish

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Daniel Dongjoo Lee

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Lindsay MacLean

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Minnie T. Fu

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. James Maskalyk

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Roland Jones

Staff Psychiatrist, Forensic Division, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Dr. Victoria Myers

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Julianna Deutscher

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Lindsey Karmen

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Peter Collins

Staff Psychiatrist, Forensic Division, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health - Associate Professor,
Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto

Dr. Emily Austin

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Amit Chopra

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Kevin D. Bowles, RN

Manager, CAMH Emergency Department

Samuel Vaillancourt MD, MPH, FRCPC

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine and Trauma Team Leader, Unity Health Toronto - St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Peter Voore

Staff Physician, Medical Director, CAMH

Dr. Aikta Verma

Staff Physician and Chief, Department of Emergency Services, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

Dr. Gerhard Dashi

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and Credit Valley Hospital

Dr. Paul Benassi

Staff Physician, Forensic Psychiatry, Centre of Addiction and Mental Health

Dr. Daphne Voineskos

Staff Physician, Emergency Department, Temerty Centre for Therapeutic Brain Intervention, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Medical Lead, rTMS Clinic, Poul Hansen Family Centre for Depression, Toronto Western Hospital, University Health Network

Dr. Dominick Shelton

Staff Physician, Department of Emergency Services, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

Dr. David Dushenski

Staff Physician and Chief, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Kyle Vojdani

Staff Physician and Chief, Department of Emergency Medicine, Michael Garron Hospital

Dr. Alvin Yang

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Michael Garron Hospital

Dr Don Melady

Associate Professor, DFCM

Emergency Physician and Care of the Elderly, Mount Sinai ED

Dr Kate Lazier

Assistant Professor, DFCM, University of Toronto

Emergency Physician, Michael Garron Hospital

Dr. Bernard Ho

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Angie Stone

Staff Physician, Critical Care & Emergency Medicine, Michael Garron Hospital

Dr. Paul Kobic

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Catherine Varner

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Michelle Yee

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Ivy Cheng

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Sunnybrook Hospital

Dr Nadia Primiani

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Sinai Health System, Michael Garron Hospital

Dr. Marcella Jones

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, University Health Network

Dr. Nataie Mamen

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Michael Garron Hospital

Jennifer Sampson, RN BScN MA DEM

Manager, Emergency Department, Michael Garron Hospital

Dr. John Foote

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Howard Ovens

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Keerat Grewal

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Yasmine Mawji

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Nancy Li

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Arjun Sithamparapillai

Resident Physician, Emergency Medicine, University of Toronto

Dr. Sev Perelman

Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Tomas Novak,
Staff Physician, Emergency, Mount Sinai Hospital

Dr. Shauna Martiniuk
Staff Physician, Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital