

May 5, 2017

Economic Development Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2



Dear Councillors,

We are writing to you in view of the Economic Development Committee's upcoming May 8th meeting, at which City Council will consider approval of program funding for this year's Pride Festival.

As an organization deeply committed to serving and ensuring the health and well-being of LGBTQ populations, Sherbourne Health Centre fully supports the continued allocation of funding in the amount of \$260,000 for Pride Toronto festivities. We urge City Council to do the same.

Sherbourne participates in Pride every year to celebrate and show solidarity with LGBTQ people in our community. Pride signifies Toronto's identity as an inclusive city that embraces diversity, acceptance, and human rights for all people. Defunding Pride would send a message that is counter to this notion and our city's values. Choosing to withdraw funding for Pride would merely serve to detract focus from any current or future productive dialogue between Pride Toronto and the Toronto Police Service toward resolving the issues of police participation in the parade and more broadly, the relationship between the police and marginalized minority communities within our city.

As we observe recent and ongoing horrific incidents around the world involving persecution and torture of LGBTQ people, it could not be more paramount to demonstrate Toronto's commitment to supporting the LGBTQ community and equal human rights.

We wholeheartedly believe that the decision to continue to fund Pride will demonstrate Toronto as a world leader in supporting the LGBTQ community by honouring the legacy of our Pride celebrations, and even greater, recognizing the protection of human rights for all.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Palmer", written in a cursive style.

Hazelle Palmer
Chief Executive Officer
Sherbourne Health Centre