

September 15, 2020

To: Members of the Board of Health

From: Councillor Joe Cressy  
Chair, Toronto Board of Health

Councillor Gord Perks  
Chair, Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel

Re: Request for an update on status of the opioid poisoning crisis in Toronto

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People who use drugs continue to face a high risk of overdose and death due to the increasingly toxic, unregulated drug supply in our city. This opioid poisoning crisis is further exacerbated by the reduction of harm reduction service capacity due to COVID-19. Suspected opioid overdose calls to the Toronto Paramedics Service have been higher in February, March and April 2020. Paramedics also responded to a high number of suspected opioid overdose-related deaths in April and May; 25 in each month. In July, paramedics responded to 27 suspected opioid overdose-related deaths; the largest monthly number seen since the City began monitoring this information in September 2017, and higher than the number of COVID-19 deaths during this month.

Councillor Cressy and Councillor Perks therefore request the Board of Health to endorse the following motion:

*That the Medical Officer of Health provide an update on the status of the opioid poisoning crisis in Toronto for the October 19, 2020 Board of Health meeting, focusing on Toronto Public Health's current response, and further actions needed by all levels of government to support the response to this public health crisis.*

Sincerely,

Councillor Gord Perks  
Ward 4, Parkdale – High Park  
Chair, Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel

Councillor Joe Cressy  
Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York  
Chair, Toronto Board of Health