

**From:** [CoCSCR Toronto](#)  
**To:** [Board of Health](#)  
**Cc:** [Councillor Cressy](#); [Councillor Wongtam](#); [Brent Gilliard](#); [Tyler Johnson](#)  
**Subject:** Letters addressed to Toronto Board of Health  
**Date:** June 9, 2021 2:02:11 PM  
**Attachments:** [CoCSCR Letter for BoH - 9 June 2021.pdf](#)  
[Letter from health professionals - signed.pdf](#)

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Hello!

Please find attached two letters for the attention of all members of the Board of Health, regarding agenda item HL29.1 for the June 14th meeting.

Thank you,

Graeme Lamb  
Coalition for COVID-Safe Club Reopening

Members of the Board of Health,

As immunization progresses and COVID-19 case numbers decline, it's encouraging to see more businesses prepare reopen in Toronto. But the pandemic is far from over. People who have received only one dose of a vaccine remain vulnerable. If bathhouses reopen over the coming months, they will need to implement public health measures that address their unique characteristics.

Bathhouses aren't gyms; they're not restaurants; they're not hotels; they're not spas. The risks of transmission are different when people are meeting primarily for sex. That means bathhouse operators will have to receive adequate guidance so they know what measures they should implement. Toronto Public Health can provide this guidance based on consultation with AIDS service organizations and other stakeholders. We can't assume that the provincial government will provide sufficient guidelines and hope for the best.

You can ensure that Toronto Public Health will issue informed local guidelines for bathhouses that secure community trust, allow harm reduction services to resume when their doors open, and keep us safe. Please listen to bathhouse workers, customers, and health professionals who want to make sure they reopen safely. Request that the Medical Officer of Health consult with stakeholders and issue guidelines specifically for bathhouses.

Coalition for COVID-Safe Club Reopening

9 June 2021

Safe bathhouse reopening:  
Letter from health researchers and practitioners to Toronto Board of Health

Members of the Board of Health,

As health professionals rooted in the 2SLGBTQ+ community, we are concerned that time is running out to ensure that when Toronto's bathhouses reopen, they do so in a way that is safe for everyone who uses them. Bathhouses are important community spaces that have remained open in Toronto throughout the AIDS crisis. In the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic it is imperative that when they reopen, they do so in a way that minimizes transmission risks.

Toronto's bathhouses are significant sites of sexual health education and harm reduction thanks to outreach services offered by AIDS Service Organizations and other community partners. Toronto Public Health should ensure that bathhouses reopen under conditions in which these organizations can safely resume their in-person programs.

In order for bathhouses to reopen safely they will need appropriate guidelines, which the provincial government has not yet provided. Public health measures that have been developed for other businesses such as restaurants, gyms or personal care services do not address the risks of transmission that arise in a space where patrons are primarily meeting for sex. The only way to guarantee that bathhouse employees, customers, and outreach staff will be safe returning to these spaces is if they are fully immunized.

We therefore strongly urge the Board of Health to request at its June 14th meeting that the Medical Officer of Health consult with stakeholders and develop local guidelines for reopening bathhouses. These guidelines should ensure that everyone frequenting bathhouses has received both doses of an approved vaccine.

We can't wait to deal with this in September. We can't assume that the provincial government will provide solutions. Our community needs you to act now.

Sincerely,

9 June 2021

Adrienne K. Chan, MD, MPH, FRCPC  
*Physician, Anita Rachlis Clinic, Sunnybrook Hospital*

William Gooding  
*National Director, Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research*

Sue Hranilovic, NP-PHC, MN  
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*Professor, Medicine and Immunology, University of Toronto*

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