



**Canadian Union of
Public Employees**

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Bargaining Units:

Bridgepoint Hospital
- Nurses & Paramedical
Units
- Service Units

City of Toronto
- Full-Time
- Long-Term Care Homes
& Services Part-Time
- Recreation Workers
Part-Time
- Unit B Part-Time

*Toronto Community
Housing Corporation*

DELIVERED BY E-MAIL AND REGULAR MAIL

June 30, 2014

Councillor Joe Mihevc, Chair
And Members of the Board of Health
c/o Clerk's Office
10th Floor, West Tower
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Mihevc and Members of the Board of Health:

**RE: HL32.3 Comprehensive Review of Cold Weather Protocols and
Cold Weather Health Impacts in Toronto**

CUPE Local 79 members provide support and services to the City's vulnerable populations through many Divisions and a wide-ranging number of programs – public health, shelters, child care, long-term care, employment and social services, to name a few.

After the extreme climate events in recent years, developing a comprehensive Cold Weather Plan that brings together City services to support, protect and reduce health risks is a sound idea. There are many populations in Toronto that are susceptible to extreme weather conditions – the homeless, the elderly and people with pre-existing health conditions.

Shelter, Support and Housing, working in collaboration with the Medical Officer of Health, will greatly assist co-ordination and communications efforts during Extreme Cold Weather Alerts.

The reviews of the Metro Hall Warming Centre (MHWC) pilot in 2014, demonstrate the critical need for a 24-hour drop-in centre as part of the support system for the homeless. The consultation sessions held upon the conclusion of the pilot gave us insight into the needs of the clients served and provided valuable knowledge about what's needed to make a 24-hour drop-in centre work for everyone.

Metro Hall was not an ideal facility for this purpose but the care and commitment by City staff and volunteer/community agencies made all the difference during this extended period of extreme cold weather. (A sincere thank you to all the tireless and compassionate workers who gave their all during this severe crisis – lives were saved because of you.)

A 24-hour drop-in centre must be part of the shelter system – starting this coming winter. The centre must be a City project – put in place by the City with adequate resources to provide a high standard of care. The City must be the anchor.

The recommendations in the Report call for the issuance of a “Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) in 2014 to establish community interest in operating/and/or coordinating 24-hour drop-in services during Extreme Cold Weather Alerts”.

Why wouldn't the City directly operate this new and needed facility? Shelters are full to over-capacity year round and community agencies are overwhelmed by the need for the services they provide. The City should identify an existing facility, develop it as a drop-in centre, and run it. The City has the expertise and the experience to provide co-ordination, oversight and quality control. This is not an 'enhancement' – it is essential.

This should be a City project, a vital part of our services to the City's populations. Services delivered by dedicated public servants.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Maguire". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Tim Maguire
President