



June 30, 2016

To Toronto Board of Health: Joe Mihevc (Chair), Stacey Berry, Ashna Bowry, Jon Burnside, Christin Carmichael Greb, Joe Cressy, Sarah Doucette, Chris Glover, Angela Jonsson, Elisa Levi, Paul Nagpal, Frances Nunziata, Peter Wong

Re: July 4, 2016 - **HL 13.5 Toronto Urban Health Fund Changes to Target Populations and Funding Objectives**

The Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN) facilitates HIV/AIDS planning, collaboration, engagement and innovation to improve access to programs and services for people from diverse communities living with and most affected by HIV/AIDS.

1. THN supports the recommendation from the Medical Officer of Health that:
“The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health to report in 2017, in consultation with the Toronto Indigenous Health Advisory Circle, on the feasibility and design of a Toronto Urban Health Fund funding stream for projects targeted at the Indigenous population.”

We welcome TUHF’s commitment to a consultative, respectful approach to development of the stream by listening to and working with Indigenous organizations in Toronto including Indigenous organizations working with people living with, or at risk for HIV.

2. THN acknowledges TUHF’s commitment to people with HIV as a priority population. We are seeking an opportunity for dialogue with TUHF on how people with HIV can be engaged in 2017-20, in keeping with the consultative approach being taken with the Indigenous stream, and given that involvement of people directly affected is important for TUHF’s program overall.

The initial transition to TUHF in 2014 reduced the number of funded projects in Toronto that engaged people with HIV in HIV prevention which, in turn, discouraged agency applications in 2015-16. Current inclusion under the HIV Prevention stream is an opportunity for people with HIV to become a vital part of TUHF’s HIV prevention program in 2017-20. For example, the funding objective “to increase engagement and access to preventative and supportive environments that promote health, including reducing stigma and discrimination” requires the involvement of people with lived experience.

Making engagement a reality. THN recommends a meaningful consultation about how TUHF can truly engage people with HIV in HIV prevention. What does it mean for people with HIV to be a priority population? Now is the opportunity to have a

dialogue, and include the experience of community HIV organizations, local expertise and people with HIV experienced in peer prevention work to share ideas, identify potential roles and strategies. This would also be in keeping with Toronto Public Health's (TPH) long-term recognition of the principles of Greater and Meaningful Involvement of People living with HIV (GIPA/MIPA).

3. Harm Reduction: We wish to state our support for the direction "to develop community-based responses to address the rise in overdoses as a result of opiate use" and the aim of TPH to initiate three Supervised Injection Sites (Agenda Item **HL13.2 Implementing Supervised Injection Services in Toronto**) with programs already engaged with people who use drugs using a harm reduction approach.

THN has questions about implementation plans for TUHF for the coming three years and have re-initiated dialogue with TPH management responsible for TUHF. We appreciate the opportunities and openness to be able to bring forward concerns and ideas based upon community experience.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of individuals and communities deeply impacted by HIV in Toronto.

Murray Jose-Boerbridge (Toronto People With AIDS Foundation) and Keith Hambly (Fife House), Co-Chairs, THN Steering Committee
Shannon Ryan (Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention) and John Maxwell (AIDS Committee of Toronto), Members, THN Steering Committee

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