

January 11, 2017

To: City of Toronto Budget Committee: Jon Burnside , John Campbell , Shelley Carroll , Gary Crawford (**Chair**), Justin J. Di Ciano Mike Layton and Frances Nunziata

From: Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN)

The Toronto HIV/AIDS Network includes AIDS Service Organizations, HIV-related programs, people living with HIV/AIDS, and broader organizations that have an impact upon the lives of people living with, *affected by* and at *increased risk* of HIV/AIDS.

The Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN) has reviewed the preliminary budget and budget notes with great concern in terms of its potential devastating impact on residents of Toronto who are most vulnerable to cuts in services. The work of our Member agencies responds directly to the HIV epidemic, in prevention efforts and services to help address the challenges faced by people living with HIV, due to health issues, and also when living in poverty.

We ask that the burden of filling the City budget gap NOT fall to residents who are most vulnerable to cuts in services.

### **Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy**

Overall, there is a great danger of undoing some of the constructive work of the *Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy* and stalling the critical need to invest in and move the *Strategy* forward. Given our experience we highlight some of the issues related to Housing Stability:

We ask that proposed and optional cuts being considered related to housing services and supports and homelessness prevention NOT be included in the Budget Committee's recommendations. Such cuts would undermine the hard work, progress and commitments on housing and homelessness prevention by the City and its community partners. This includes optional cuts under consideration:

- To "eliminate the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding for supports provided through a network of community based partners. CHPI funding supports 76 community agencies in the provision of housing and homeless services through a variety of projects. CHPI funded services impacts approximately 24,000 clients each year..." (SSHA operating budget 2017 – Budget Notes ). These are on the ground, front-line services that make a difference in the day-to-day lives of people who are homeless including to provide supports to find and maintain housing.
- To undercut the Recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness by pursuing options to undermine services to residents of Toronto Community Housing including a potential reduction of "TCHC's Net Base Subsidy by 2.6%."

We support the submission of the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) including its highlighting "The proposed and optional budget cuts directly undermine critical municipal, provincial and federal policy initiatives. The pressure Toronto has put on the other orders of government is starting to pay off and right now is the wrong time to signal a loss of political support for housing and homeless services by making the wrong budget decisions."

*Why, as a City, would we consider undermining the City's commitments on practical strategies, to lift people out of poverty and homelessness?*

## Toronto Public Health - Toronto Urban Health Fund (TUHF)

Toronto Public Health, supported by the Board of Health is seeking an enhancement for the “Toronto Urban Health Fund -Year 3...37.5 thousand net”, that is NOT included in the preliminary budget. “This proposal has been previously approved by Council for phased implementation over five years, 2015 to 2019. It addresses the increasing rates of HIV/STI and high risk sexual and substance misuse behaviours among vulnerable youth living in underserved regions of the City, specifically targeting Indigenous populations and those residing in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. The enhancement will strengthen the youth sector's response in building individual and community capacity and resiliency among youth.” (Toronto Public Health 2017 Operating Budget Request, October 18, 2016).

TUHF provides one year and three year project funding to non-profit community based organizations to support initiatives under the following three streams: HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) prevention; Harm reduction and Child and youth resiliency, and has specifically engaged directly with agencies serving Indigenous residents to better serve this population– all helping Toronto Public Health reach priority populations at increased risk for and being impacted by HIV.

TUHF cannot now fund all the worthy applications it receives. Without the enhancement, the Fund will be stretched even further and valuable projects will be lost. In addition, TUHF is a cost-shared program with the province. This enhancement is a 25% contribution from the City, with 75% to be contributed by the province. “Only if the City provides its 25 percent share of the cost shared funding, can TPH accept the full funding offered by the Province to close the gap in resources required to provide needed public health services.” (Toronto Public Health 2017 Operating Budget Request, October 18, 2016)

*Why would the City not contribute \$37.5 thousand to prevent HIV infections, reduce harm and need for emergency, social and health services, AND leverage majority funds from the Province to make a difference?*

Sincerely,  
Keith Hambly (Executive Director, Fife House and  
Suzanne Paddock (Interim Executive Director, Toronto People With AIDS Foundation)  
Co-Chairs, Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN)

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