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June 30, 2017

To: Mayor and City Councillors

**Re: MM31.8 – Notice of Motion – Financial Assistance for Patients with Diabetes –  
by Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, seconded by Councillor Christin Carmichael Greb**

I am writing this letter in response to the above motion requesting "the Medical Officer of Health work collaboratively with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in designing an equitable approach on the financial assistance of providing syringes and needles for the treatment of drug users at Supervised Injection Sites and patients with type 1 diabetes" and "to bring forward a report to the next meeting of the Board of Health on September 25, 2017".

Toronto Public Health (TPH) focuses on protecting and promoting the health of Toronto residents by preventing the spread of disease, promoting healthy living, and advocating for conditions that improve health for Toronto residents.

Toronto Public Health has reviewed this issue and has determined that:

- The majority of people with type 1 diabetes achieve better control of their diabetes with insulin pumps and, therefore, do not use needles and syringes for insulin administration
- There are existing financial assistance programs in the province for people with diabetes. For example, the Ministry of Health and Long Term-Care's Assistive Devices Program provides 100% coverage of the cost for approved insulin pumps and a yearly grant of \$2,400 for related supplies for people of all ages with type 1 diabetes.  
<https://www.diabetes.ca/getmedia/4873c9cc-1105-4c11-9e90-230ea52a9c60/ontario-financial-assistance-programs.pdf.aspx>
- The provision of needles and syringes by Public Health Units in Ontario is mandated under the Ontario Public Health Standards for the control of bloodborne infections and for harm reduction purposes. These supplies are 100% provincially funded. TPH is neither funded, nor mandated to provide needles and syringes to clients for use in the treatment of diabetes.
- There are financial issues for many individuals related to medications for chronic illnesses. To address these equitably, a provincial or national pharmacare program is recommended. TPH reported on this to the Board of Health at the November 30,

2015 meeting and City Council adopted the Board of Health recommendations at the December 9, 2015 meeting of Council.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.HL8.2>

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eileen", written in a cursive style.

Eileen de Villa, MD, MBA, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health