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April 16, 2018

Councillor Mihevc  
 Board of Health members  
 Toronto

**Re: HL26.2 - Deaths of People Experiencing Homelessness - 2017 Review**

I have nothing but praise for TPH staff who did an outstanding job partnering with community groups to create the homeless death-tracking tool.

Their efforts produced results that double what community volunteers working on the monthly Homeless Memorial at Church of the Holy Trinity could obtain. These volunteers continued the work of the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee and have been tracking deaths since 2000. The Public Health results however beg for a more fulsome and urgent response. These are my suggestions.

**1) TO Public Health run a vigorous campaign to promote the death-reporting tool.**

Rationale is that reporting has fallen off. No deaths have been reported in 2018 despite known deaths commemorated at the Homeless Memorial January - April.

**2) TO Public Health provide fuller data on Indigenous deaths and location of all deaths.**

Rationale is extensive community concern.

**3) TO Public Health advocate for mandatory reporting of homeless deaths (dog bites are, gunshot wounds are).**

Rationale is hospitals are not participating due to legal constraints.

**4) City Council do more to address the overdose crisis including opening more harm reduction shelters.**

Rationale is that overdoses were documented as the number one cause of death.

**5) City Council direct Shelter, Support and Housing to fast track the 1000 new shelter beds approved by council for 2018 and implement some standards for respite sites by May, 2018 instead of November.**

Rationale is the respite sites remain substandard and are damaging health. See Toronto Ombudsman Report.

Sincerely,

Cathy Crowe, Street Nurse  
 Ryerson Distinguished Visiting Practitioner, Faculty of Arts

*Honorary Doctor of Science in Nursing (University of Victoria), Honorary Doctor of Laws (McMaster), Honorary Doctor of the University (U of Ottawa), Honorary Doctor of Laws (York University), Honorary Bachelor of Applied Studies (Humber College) Honorary Doctor of Laws (University of Windsor)*