



Learning from the deaths of Grant Faulkner and Bradley Chapman

Presentation to the Economic and Community
Development Committee

Sept. 5, 2019



Good morning. My name is Lynn Anne Mulrooney. I am a registered nurse and Senior Policy Analyst at the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, or as it often known: RNAO.

Thank you for the opportunity to share RNAO's perspective on the City of Toronto's implementation of recommendations from the inquests into the deaths of Grant Faulkner and Bradley Chapman. As RNAO was granted the privilege of being designated by the Coroner as a person permitted to make submissions at both inquests, RNAO was present each day to hear the compelling evidence. These were the first inquests into the deaths of people who were homeless in more than a decade and so there is an additional responsibility that the juries' recommendations be carefully considered and implemented.

We respect that the City of Toronto is a leader in demonstrating the effectiveness of harm reduction as a means to reduce deaths from the toxic drug supply. At Mr. Chapman's inquest and in the media, Toronto's medical officer of health, Dr. deVilla has described the opioid overdose crisis as "the defining health crisis of our time." While fully appreciating the work that the City has already done to advance some of the recommendations from both inquests, much more and quicker action needs to be taken.

RNAO shares with you the common objective of a city and province where all people can live in health and dignity. In order to make that possible, we urge a greater sense of urgency from the City in addressing homelessness, lack of affordable and supportive housing, and a public health approach to drug policy.

RNAO's written submission contains more detailed rationales and references for your consideration.

Specific measures that we urge the City to take include fact checking to ensure that reports of the City's actions are congruent with the evidence. As an example, attachment 3 states that the number of individuals who die while being homeless is posted online quarterly. In fact, as the most current data that is posted is from December 2018, our snapshot of what is happening is nine months old. It is critical that the City improve, rather than backtrack, on accurate data collection and reporting in order to prevent deaths of other people who are homeless.

A second example is found in attachment 1 that claims that "residents are able to access cool spaces" through the Heat Relief Network. Information on a website is not the same as actually

having access to a cool space now that the city's cooling centres have been closed. Directing people who are homeless to already full respite centres and drop-ins is cruel and suggesting splash pads and shopping malls has resulted in some traumatizing experiences for people who have experienced active hostility from those seeking to "move them along."

RNAO also urges the City to abide by the spirit and intention of the jury at the Chapman inquest. They recommended that the recipients of the recommendations report back to the Office of the Chief Coroner and parties to the inquest in six months and "annually for 5 years, in an open letter, regarding the progress made with respect to these recommendations." In order to ensure action, accountability, and transparency, this recommendation should be applied to both inquests and the City's actions should be reviewed and posted annually for the next four years.

RNAO will continue to encourage your leadership and transparency in addressing this complex challenge.

Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions.