



HL3.07 Joe Cressy 周凱捷

City Councillor | Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York

February 7, 2019

To: Members of the Board of Health
From: Councillor Joe Cressy
Chair, Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel
Re: Need for more affordable, supportive and harm reduction housing

At its meeting in January 2019, the Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel discussed the intersection of homelessness and the lack of affordable and supportive housing options on the current opioid overdose crisis. Access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing is critical to preventing the harms associated with substance use. Individuals who have lost their housing and become homeless are at an increased risk for overdose and other health harms. Stable and affordable housing is critical to stabilizing their lives and improving their health and well-being. However, finding and maintaining housing can be difficult for people who use drugs because of the discrimination they often face in the housing market.

We need a range of housing options that respond to the diverse needs of people in our community, including people who use drugs. This includes more affordable housing but also supportive housing and harm reduction housing. Housing was one of the key strategies recommended in the *Toronto Overdose Action Plan*, which the Board of Health endorsed in March 2017. While the City of Toronto is working to increase the affordable housing stock in Toronto, including through the Housing Now initiative approved by City Council on January 30, 2019, more action is needed.

The City is developing a new 10-year housing plan, and including a public health perspective is critical to informing this planning process. The Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel therefore asks the Board of Health to endorse the following motion:

That the Medical Officer of Health articulate the critical role of supportive and harm reduction housing as part of the development of the City of Toronto's new 10-year affordable housing plan.

Sincerely,

Councillor Joe Cressy
Ward 10 Spadina-Fort York
Chair, Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel