



October 27, 2019

Mayor John Tory and
Members of Toronto City Council
The City of Toronto
100 Queen Street
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: Council Member Motion # 11.12 by Councillors Kristyn Wong Tam and Joe Cressy

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of Council:

On behalf of the University of Toronto, I write to lend our support to the efforts Councillor Wong-Tam and members of Council are making to advocate for mental health and addictions treatment.

We support Council making a request to the Federal Government to provide \$300 million annually to address Toronto's mental health and addictions crises and, in particular, efforts to scale up evidence-based, community-oriented mental health services.

In 2017, we joined with the Council of Ontario Universities, Colleges Ontario, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, and the College Students Association to launch an action plan on post-secondary student mental health outlined in the report *In It Together: Taking Action on Student Mental Health*. The report contains 26 recommendations based on principles of ensuring a "whole of community" approach, equitable access, prevention, and harm reduction. We continue to advocate for the implementation of these recommendations across all levels of government.

In 2018 the University of Toronto hosted your "Mayor's Mental Health Summit" and we stand ready to assist you and City Council, in collaboration with other levels of government, to deal with this very real, very pressing issue. The magnitude of these problems requires multiple partners working together so that solutions can be found.

Most recently, in light of the continuing tragedy of additional deaths by suicide on our campuses, we have invested nearly \$3 million a year to respond to the current demand and growing needs around mental health support. This annual, ongoing investment has allowed us to add 11 more counsellors and 12 additional staff in accessibility services, doubling the number of advisors. We have also set up our own 24 hour hotline, and we have launched a Task Force on Student Mental Health, chaired by Professor Trevor Young, the Dean of our Faculty of Medicine.

We are redoubling our efforts to focus services to assist students experiencing mental health challenges, but we cannot do this alone. As such, we thank you and the members of Council for your efforts to raise these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meric S. Gertler". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Meric S. Gertler
President