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October 29, 2019

To Mayor John Tory and Toronto City Councillors:

The Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) is in strong support of Councillor Wong-Tam's motion, *Request to the Government of Canada to Commit to National Mental Health Parity and to Invest \$900M Per Year to Address Toronto's Mental Health and Addictions Crises.*

There is no doubt that we need intentional inter-governmental commitments and partnerships to address the homelessness crisis that continues in Toronto. This includes the important areas of mental health and addictions and supportive housing. Investing effectively in both will go a long way to ending people's homelessness and reducing it in Toronto overall.

Over 8,000 people experience homelessness every day, and night, 32% of which report struggling with mental health issues and 27% with addictions. Often people share both challenges. The numbers become more alarming amongst those that sleep outdoors - 56% of people outside report issues with mental health and 57% with addictions.

For these reasons and more, we are pleased to see Councillor Wong-Tam's motion calling for immediate, annual funding from our federal government. Toronto cannot tackle this alone, nor should we have to.

As part of the goals of the National Housing Strategy the federal government has committed to cutting chronic homelessness in Canada by half. It is common knowledge that mental health and addictions contribute significantly to creating chronic homelessness. The federal goal will not be achieved without Toronto's success in doing the same. This means they must invest more stable, annual funding in our ability to serve those who are homeless and living with mental health and addictions through better community-oriented services and the creation of, at least, our current goal of 18,000 new supportive housing units.

The federal government must hear from Toronto loud and clear, and we commend Councillor Wong-Tam for bringing this motion forward. We trust that all City Councillors and the Mayor support it.

Sincerely,

Kira Heineck
Executive Lead, TAEH

Committed to Ending Homelessness
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