



Member Motion

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM37.17	ACTION			Ward: All
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Creating a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy for Toronto - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Mayor John Tory

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Board of Health. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Mayor John Tory, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Medical Officer of Health, in consultation with the City Manager, to investigate options to better coordinate mental health and addictions services in Toronto, including the necessity and feasibility of a dedicated office, and to report to the Board of Health in early 2022.
2. City Council request the City Manager to develop an advocacy strategy, including using elected officials, to lobby the Provincial and Federal Governments for increased support for community-based agencies delivering mental health services in Toronto.

Summary

Mental health and addictions related issues have significantly increased across Toronto during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City of Toronto, working with the Province and Federal governments, urgently requires a comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy to prepare for this.

In March 2021, Calgary City Council adopted a mental health and addiction strategy to support their residents and business owners. The first of its kind in Canada, the strategy's goal is to create hope, strengthen support, and improve the quality of life for people, families, and communities living with mental health issues and addictions. Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy is a five-year community-based, cross-sector initiative convened by the City of Calgary.

Although the majority of the funding for mental health and addictions agencies is provided by the Province on Ontario and the Federal Government, the City of Toronto funds many mental health and addictions initiatives across the City, such as the Toronto Public Health harm reduction services, mental health and addictions supportive housing through Toronto

Community Housing, Mobile Crisis Intervention Teams which are a partnership between the Toronto Police Service and local hospitals, and the suicide prevention initiatives of the TTC, among others.

In addition, the City funds workplace mental health and wellbeing initiatives for its employees.

These initiatives exist in different portfolios and all mental health funding – from all levels of government – would benefit from increased coordination and accountability in Toronto through developing a comprehensive City of Toronto Mental Health and Addictions Strategy that could include an office to oversee and implement the strategy.

Background Information (City Council)

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