



CITY COUNCILLOR

Shelley Carroll 高雪莉
WARD 17 DON VALLEY NORTH



Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Suite A3
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 2N2

April 21, 2023

Re: Data on the Health of People Experiencing Homelessness

Dear Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

The COVID-19 pandemic, combined with the opioid overdose crisis, has further magnified the issue of homelessness and the urgent need to work together to protect the health and well-being of people experiencing homelessness. We need to continue to build on the collaboration that has taken place during the pandemic and strengthen how we use data to inform the planning and delivery of shelter and health services in Toronto.

Connecting Home Initiative

The Connecting Home Initiative is a proposal to create a real-time, e-integrated platform using client data from University Health Toronto (UHT), Inner City Health Associates (ICHA), and the Shelter Management Information System (SMIS). Through this work, clients experiencing homelessness could enable their health service providers to access their information to improve health and housing outcomes; and enable data-driven improvements in shelter and housing service, health care, and system planning.

The first step in this project would be to undertake a feasibility assessment to understand if the Connecting Home Initiative is viable from a legal, privacy, and technical perspective, and what related challenges and opportunities are present. I am recommending that City staff work with Unity Health Toronto and Inner City Health Associates to assess feasibility.

Death of Shelter Resident Data

Since 2007, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) has collected and reported on deaths of individuals staying in municipally administered shelters. The death of shelter residents data is a subset of data shared by Toronto Public Health (TPH) on its Deaths of People Experiencing Homelessness dashboard. The TPH dashboard includes figures on deaths of individuals experiencing homelessness staying in shelters, as well as people living outdoors or at other locations. Because of the relationship between the two data sets, starting in 2023, the deaths of shelter residents data was changed to align with the release of Toronto Public Health's data on deaths of people experiencing homelessness, typically in March and September.

Data on the deaths of people experiencing homelessness allows the City and community partners to address urgent needs and respectfully grieve individuals at the time of their deaths. I am requesting that the General Manager of SSHA work with the Medical Officer of Health to explore options for more frequent and aligned reporting on the deaths of people experiencing homelessness.



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Recommendations:

1. City Council authorize the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Unity Health Toronto and Inner City Health Associates for the Connecting Home Initiative feasibility assessment, to assess the legal, privacy, and technical viability of developing a shared platform to improve health and housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness in Toronto, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration and Director, Strategic Partnerships, City Manager's Office, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
2. City Council request the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration work with the Medical Officer of Health to explore options for more frequent and aligned reporting on the deaths of people experiencing homelessness.

Sincerely,

Councillor Shelley Carroll
Chair, Economic and Community Development Committee
Ward 17 – Don Valley North