

Appointment of Members to the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel

Date: August 26, 2024

To: Board of Health

From: Medical Officer of Health

Wards: All

SUMMARY

In November 2023, the Board of Health adopted [Our Health, Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy for Toronto](#), which is a comprehensive five-year and city-wide strategy to address both mental health and substance use related issues in Toronto.

In March 2024, the Board of Health directed the Medical Officer of Health to initiate an open process to recruit candidates for a new Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel in consultation with the Chair of the Implementation Panel, and to report back to the Board of Health in the third quarter of 2024 with the recommended candidates for appointment.

This report outlines the recruitment process and recommends twelve candidates for appointment to the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health appoint the twelve candidates listed in Attachment 1 to this report to the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel, for a 2.5-year term beginning on September 9, 2024, and ending on March 9, 2027, and until successors are appointed.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Based on anticipated frequency of meetings and the number of members who may be eligible for honoraria, the financial impact to Toronto Public Health to provide honoraria for the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel for 2024-2027 term is estimated to be \$1,800 per year.

These costs can be accommodated within the 2024 Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health and will be included in future years.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On March 25, 2024, the Board of Health directed that a recruitment process be initiated for members to join the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel. The Board of Health also approved the Terms of Reference and appointed Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik to Chair the Implementation Panel.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.HL11.3>

On November 27, 2023, the Board of Health endorsed Our Health, Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy for Toronto and requested the Medical Officer of Health to establish an implementation panel for the strategy.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.HL8.1>

COMMENTS

Our Health, Our City: A Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy for Toronto responds to direction from the Board of Health to develop a comprehensive approach to mental health and substance use issues in Toronto. This strategy offers a range of recommendations across seven strategic goals and was developed with extensive community engagement.

Toronto Public Health Strategic Impact

The recommendations in this report help implement the recommended actions outlined in the Our Health, Our City Strategy and advance the following priorities of the TPH Strategic Plan 2024-2028:

1. Strengthen health protection, disease prevention and emergency preparedness, including meeting the objective of effectively communicating with the public about how they can protect their health.
2. Promote health and well-being across the lifespan, including meeting the objective to reduce the burden of chronic and infectious diseases across the lifespan.

3. Promote the conditions to support positive mental health and reduce the harms of substance use, including meeting the objectives to deliver public health interventions that promote mental health, reduce harms associated with the use of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vapour products, strengthen public health services that are trauma-informed and reduce stigma, and deliver public health interventions that promote mental health.

4. Advocate to advance health equity, including meeting the objective to assess and report on health inequities and population health needs, collaborate with partners across multiple sectors to address local health needs, and share evidence, advocate, and collaborate to influence actions that impact population health.

Implementation Approach

Implementation efforts for the Our Health, Our City Strategy will be guided by two advisory tables: the Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy Interdivisional Table, and the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel.

Mental Health, Substance Use, Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategy Interdivisional Table

This interdivisional table is comprised of leadership at the City of Toronto. The table meets quarterly to ensure alignment around substance use and mental health issues across City Divisions and to achieve progress on priority action items identified in the Our Health, Our City Strategy.

Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel

A key guiding principle while developing the Our Health, Our City Strategy was the meaningful inclusion of people with lived and living experience. The participation of people who use drugs and people with lived/living experience of mental health challenges and illnesses, as well as frontline service providers who work with these communities, is also integral to the success of the Our Health, Our City Strategy implementation efforts.

To have meaningful inclusion of people who use drugs and people with lived/living experience of mental health challenges and illnesses, as well as frontline service providers who work with these communities to support the implementation of the Our Health, Our City Strategy, the following composition for the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel was approved by the Board of Health on March 25, 2024:

- The panel Chair, Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik
- Six people with lived and living experience of substance use and/or mental health challenges and/or illnesses, including at least one youth representative;
- Six representatives from the substance use and/or mental health sectors, including community agency leadership, health care providers, and researchers;
- Five representatives from City Boards and City of Toronto Divisions, Agencies and Corporations (Social Development, Finance and Administration, Toronto Shelter and

- Support Services, Toronto Employment and Social Services, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto Police Services); and
- One representative from the Toronto District School Board.

Mandate of the Implementation Panel

The mandate of the Implementation Panel is to provide advice to help implement and guide recommendations outlined in the strategy, including:

- Providing advice on the annual implementation priorities;
- Sharing data and knowledge (lived/living and/or professional expertise) to support implementation;
- Fostering intersectoral relationships and collaboration;
- Supporting recruitment of individuals for additional consultations or potential working groups;
- Championing action on recommendations and communicating implementation efforts with networks; and,
- Providing feedback on the annual progress report on the Our Health, Our City Strategy.

The term of membership will be for 2.5 years (i.e., half of the implementation cycle for the Our Health, Our City Strategy), or until a successor is appointed. It is expected that members attend a minimum of four meetings each year. The Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel will meet approximately once every two months for up to two hours in person.

Recruitment Process

The recruitment process for the Implementation Panel began with a public call for applications. Calls for applications were shared through multiple channels to ensure broad reach, including the City of Toronto website and social media platforms. Additionally, email invitations to apply were sent to stakeholders, including previous members of the Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel, and individuals and organizations who participated in the engagements to develop the strategy.

Toronto Public Health received over 160 applications, including approximately 40 applications from people identifying as having relevant lived and/or living experience. The applications were assessed in relation to the following questions:

- Does the applicant's expressed interest (or mandate of the applicant's organization) align with the vision, mission, and principles of the Our Health, Our City Strategy?
- Does the applicant demonstrate relevant skills, networks, and experience (lived and/or professional) that will advance the work of the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel?
- Does the applicant outline relevant experience and/or skills to advance equity, diversity and inclusion through their contributions to the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel?
- Did the candidate either work or live in Toronto?

Additional consideration was given to individuals with prior experience as a member of the Toronto Drug Strategy Implementation Panel and people from equity deserving groups to ensure diverse representation from populations that are disproportionately impacted by mental health and/or substance use issues.

The top scoring candidates were compiled into a shortlist for consideration by a review panel. The review panel consisted of Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, Medical Officer of Health Dr. Eileen de Villa, and Board of Health Director Dr. Stephanie Zhou. From this shortlist, candidates were invited to participate in a 15–20-minute interview, which informed the final list of candidates recommended for appointment, as outlined in Attachment 1.

Next Steps

The Implementation Panel will hold its first meeting in the third quarter of 2024. A progress report and proposed year two implementation priorities will be presented to the Board of Health in the fourth quarter of 2024.

CONTACT

Uppala Chandrasekera, Director, Public Health, Strategy and Clinical Services, Toronto Public Health, 416-338-1308, Uppala.Chandrasekera@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Recommended Candidates for Appointment to the Our Health, Our City Implementation Panel