

## **Downtown Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub**

**Date:** February 7, 2025

**To:** Board of Health

**From:** Acting Medical Officer of Health

**Wards:** All

### **SUMMARY**

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The Government of Ontario legislated new requirements for operating supervised consumption services that will lead to the closure of five sites in Toronto by March 31, 2025. This includes the closure of the supervised consumption service operated by Toronto Public Health (The Works), currently located at 277 Victoria Street.

Supervised Consumption Service sites impacted by the legislation, including the site operated by Toronto Public Health, were invited to apply to transition their services into Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs. Toronto Public Health, in partnership with multiple City Divisions, hospital, health, and community partners, applied to the Ministry of Health to establish the Downtown Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub.

The Downtown HART Hub will aim to improve health of City residents by facilitating access to health care services for people who use drugs, including improved access to treatment and recovery services, and integrated pathways to wrap-around supports such as mental health care and housing. HART Hub services can include some interventions that can help prevent the spread of bloodborne infections in the community.

On January 2, 2025, Toronto Public Health received confirmation from the Ministry of Health that the City of Toronto's Downtown HART Hub has been approved 'in principle.' This report provides an overview of plans to establish the City of Toronto's Downtown HART Hub.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Acting Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health endorse the establishment of the City of Toronto's Downtown HART Hub as developed with partners.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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Toronto Public Health is currently waiting for official confirmation of the funding allocation from the Province and working on determining the appropriate site and suite of services for the Downtown Hart Hub, in consultation with City Divisions and Hub partners. Once confirmation is received and costs and services for the HART Hub are finalized, Toronto Public Health will report back to the Board of Health including funding requirements, and request the necessary budget adjustments for the 2025 Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health.

Funding for a permanent future location of a Downtown HART Hub has been included in the 2025 Capital Budget and 2026-2034 Capital Plan for Toronto Public Health and Corporate Real Estate Management.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

## DECISION HISTORY

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On January 20, 2025, the Board of Health urged the Government of Ontario to increase access to Supervised Consumption Services and Consumption and Treatment Service Sites consistent with the location requirements within the *Community Care and Recovery Act, 2024*, permit needle exchange services within HART Hubs, and share provincial plans for mitigating healthcare system impacts.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.HL21.6>

## COMMENTS

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The City's proposed HART Hub will aim to improve health for City residents by facilitating access to health care services for people who use drugs, including a suite of coordinated health services and improved connections to mental health care, supportive housing, and social supports.

The City's Downtown HART Hub partners include several City of Toronto Divisions and partners in the hospital and community services sector. Through the development of new programming and referral pathways, the Downtown HART Hub is anticipated to:

- Facilitate rapid access to treatment, recovery, and wrap-around mental health, community, and social supports,
- Facilitate access to supportive housing,
- Improve client-centered health service delivery and reduce deaths and illnesses associated with substance use and,
- Increase diversion from hospital emergency departments and reduce demand on first responder resources.

## **Downtown HART Hub**

In April 2022, City Council approved the sale of 277 Victoria Street, where several Toronto Public Health clinical programs are located. Due to the sale of 277 Victoria Street, all Toronto Public Health programs and clinical services must vacate the building by March 31, 2025.

Toronto Public Health is working with Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) to renovate and prepare the interim and final site for the Downtown HART Hub. The City continues to work closely with its partners to determine the services that will be available in the Downtown HART Hub.

## **Next Steps**

Toronto Public Health is collaborating with Hub partners to determine the suite of services that will be available for clients in Spring 2025 within available operating budget and physical space constraints. Toronto Public Health continues to work with CREM to finalize plans for the interim and final locations of the Downtown HART Hub.

The next annual Our Health, Our City report to the Board of Health in November 2025 will include an update on HART Hub operations.

## **Toronto Public Health Strategic Impact**

This report provides an update on services related to the drug toxicity epidemic and homelessness, and advances the following priorities of the Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028:

1. Strengthen health protection, disease prevention and emergency preparedness
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 respond to the drug toxicity epidemic, and strengthening public health services that are trauma-informed and reduce stigma.

4. Advocate to advance health equity, including by collaborating with partners across multiple sectors to address local health needs.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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