



## OLIVIA CHOW MAYOR

April 1, 2025

Dear Members of the Board of Health,

As indicated in the letter from the Chair, in December 2024, the Government of Ontario passed the Community Care and Recovery Act and mandated the closure of five Supervised Consumption Service (SCS) sites and Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) in Toronto. These services will wind down operations no later than March 31, 2025. As Mayor of Toronto, I maintain that SCS and CTS sites provide vital health services and are an integral component of our response to addictions and mental health.

Today, I am writing about the development of a new service model aimed at supporting individuals impacted by homelessness and substance use in Toronto.

Last year, the provincial government also announced a new funding stream to support the creation of Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs. HART Hubs are intended to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness and struggling with substance use by offering a range of integrated supports.

SCS sites impacted by the Community Care and Recovery Act were encouraged to apply for funding to transition their services to the new HART Hub model. This included the City, through Toronto Public Health (TPH), which operated an SCS at The Works, 277 Victoria St.

With partners across City divisions, healthcare, and community organizations, the City submitted an application to the Ministry of Health to secure funding for a new Downtown HART Hub. Earlier this year, the City was notified that the application was approved in principle.

The City's Downtown HART Hub application outlined a vision for wraparound, co-located services to respond to pressing health and social challenges in the downtown core. Proposed services include 24/7 intake, medical monitoring and referrals, supportive housing, substance use treatment, primary care, outpatient medical specialty services, assertive community treatment, withdrawal management beds, referrals, and more.

A permanent site for the Downtown HART Hub is being established and requires upgrades for clinical use. While capital improvements are underway at the permanent site, the Downtown HART Hub will operate under an interim disaggregated model.

The interim model will stand up a network of services provided by the City, healthcare, and community partners in the downtown core, an area that remains acutely impacted by the drug toxicity and mental health crisis.

As the City establishes the interim model, engagement is proceeding with partners to determine key services provided, including dedicated outreach and case management supports on a mobile basis, which means trained staff from the City and partner organizations will be meeting clients where they are and ensuring they are connected to the appropriate care.

Whether they are accessing services now under the satellite model, or in the future at the permanent site, clients of the City's Downtown HART Hub must be able to obtain the lifesaving services they need in a coordinated and dignified manner. This model was developed to help ensure that no one falls through the cracks, and we must do everything we can to ensure it lives up to its promise.

I am invested in the success of this Hub and eager to see how implementation evolves.

## **Recommendations**

That the Board of Health:

1. Direct the acting Medical Officer of Health to begin implementation of the interim Downtown HART Hub model, as set out in the update from the Medical Officer of Health and in accordance with the City of Toronto's application to the Ministry of Health for HART Hub funding; and
2. Direct the acting Medical Officer of Health to report back once confirmation of Provincial funding is received with:
  - a. An update on the interim HART Hub model, including rollout of services, partnerships, and opportunities to enhance wrap-around case management supports
  - b. Information on the permanent HART Hub model, including planned services, partnerships, and timelines for completion; and
  - c. Any agreements and authorities required to enable the Downtown HART Hub.

Sincerely,

Mayor Olivia Chow