

# CITY OF HAMILTON M O T I O N

Emergency & Community Services Committee Date: April 6, 2023

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR C. CLARK** .....  
**SECONDED BY** .....

## **Declarations of Emergency in the Areas Of Homelessness, Mental Health and Opioid Addiction**

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton acknowledges that the challenges of homelessness, mental health and the opioid crisis are exceptionally complex issues that have a measurable and significantly detrimental impact, including the loss of life;

WHEREAS, the challenges of homelessness, mental health and opioids have seen a trend of becoming more prevalent in recent years and continue to have a significant impact on the Hamilton communities;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton has met or exceeded its mandate in all of these areas, investing millions of unsustainable local property tax dollars into related programs and services;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton acknowledges that the challenges of homelessness, mental health and the opioid crisis are intrinsically diverse and should not be viewed as a single monolithic problem;

WHEREAS, the challenges of homelessness, mental health and opioid addiction are found throughout the entire province of Ontario and are not unique to Hamilton;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton recognizes that municipal emergencies in Ontario are declared by the head of council as per the process detailed in the Emergency Management and Civil Protections Act; and

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton acknowledges that the declaration of an emergency does not immediately result in a municipality receiving any additional funds or resources from senior levels of government

### **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Mayor formally issue three separate declarations of emergency, in the areas of homelessness, mental health and opioid addiction, as per the procedure outlined in the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act;
- (b) That the Mayor send correspondence to the Provincial Government requesting that action be taken on the eight measures proposed by the Association of Local Public Health Agencies including:

- (i) Creation of a multi-sectoral task force to guide the development of a robust provincial opioid response plan that will ensure necessary resourcing, policy change, and health and social system coordination;
  - (ii) Expanding access to evidence informed harm reduction programs and practices including lifting the provincial cap of 21 Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS) Sites, funding Urgent Public Health Needs Sites (UPHNS) and scaling up safer supply options;
  - (iii) Revision of the current CTS model to address the growing trends of opioid poisoning amongst those who are using inhalation methods;  
Public Health and Social Services Committee
  - (iv) Expanding access to opioid agonist therapy for opioid use disorder through a range of settings (e.g. mobile outreach, primary care, emergency departments, Rapid Access to Addiction Medicine Clinics), and a variety of medication options;
  - (v) Providing a long-term financial commitment to create more affordable and supportive housing for people in need, including people with substance use disorders;
  - (vi) Addressing the structural stigma and harms that discriminate against people who use drugs, through provincial support and advocacy to the Federal government to decriminalize personal use and possession of substances and ensure increased investments in health and social services at all levels;
  - (vii) Increasing investments in evidence-informed substance use prevention and mental health promotion initiatives that provide foundational support for the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families, and neighbourhoods, beginning from early childhood; and
  - (viii) Funding additional and dedicated positions for public health to support the critical coordination and leadership of local opioid and substance abuse strategies;
- (c) That the Mayor send correspondence to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting action be taken to correct the funding allocation model for homelessness based on the results of Auditor General's 2021 report which found that provincial funding in this area is incorrect;
- (d) That the Mayor send correspondence to the Ministry of Health and the CEO of Ontario Health requesting that the province immediately commit to fully funding gaps in mental health service as have been identified in the Needs Based Planning project by Niagara Ontario Health Team's Mental Health and Addictions Working Group, as well as funding ongoing annual increases as required by inflation and population need;
- (e) That the Mayor send correspondence to Federal Minister of Justice and Attorney General, David Lametti, and Federal Minister of Health, Jean-Yves Duclos, reaffirming Regional Council's October 22, 2020 motion urging the Federal government convene a task force to explore the legal regulation and

decriminalization of all drugs in Canada; Public Health and Social Services Committee

- (f) That the Mayor send correspondence to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) requesting that targeted advocacy be conducted in these areas, including the development of a singular motion that can be ratified by municipal councils across Ontario calling on the province to take immediate action.