



Statement regarding Establishment of the Toronto Police Services Board's Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Panel

The Board is pleased to announce that, at its meeting of February 21, 2019, it unanimously approved the establishment of a new Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Panel, or MHAAP.

Over the past ten years, the Board has undertaken a wide variety of significant initiatives in the area of mental health and addictions, demonstrating the priority it places on this critical topic and laying a strong foundation for our work in the future.

In September 2009, the Board established a Mental Health Sub-Committee, consisting of people with lived experience, many local Toronto community health service providers, hospitals, members of the Toronto Police Service and the Board, as well as representatives from the provincial Ministry of Health. This group has provided the Board and the Service advice on best practices for a number of key issues, including mobile crisis intervention teams, police-hospital protocols, police-community partnerships, and mental health police records, annual training on use of force and responding to individuals in crisis, and offered input in implementing several key Coroner's Jury Inquest recommendations as well as important external reports such as *Police Encounters with People in Crisis*, by the Honourable Frank Iacobucci.

Other accomplishments in this area include the addition of a specific priority in the Service's business plan on police interactions with people in crisis, the implementation of the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace to promote mental health and wellness for Service members, progressive updates to the Service's police records check program, and the establishment of a Mental Health Excellence Award to recognize members of the Service who have demonstrated great leadership in promoting mental health and responding to individuals in crisis.

In 2016, the Board established a Mental Health External Advisory Committee to independently assess and evaluate the work of the Service and Board in responding to individuals in crisis, and other key issues relating to mental health and addictions across the organization. The Honourable Michael Wilson, Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, who sadly passed away recently, was a member of this group and we are grateful for his invaluable contribution.

The Mental Health External Advisory Committee recommended that the Service, in consultation with the Board, develop a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy. The development of this important Strategy has been underway for the past two years, in collaboration with members of the Service and the Mental Health Sub-Committee, to ensure comprehensive community input. We anticipate that the new Strategy will be released later this year.



The Board would like to acknowledge all of the members of the Mental Health Sub-Committee who have participated and worked collaboratively with the Board and Service over the past ten years. The Board is extremely grateful to our Sub-Committee, because the advice of its members was a significant contribution to the way in which the Board and Service have shifted the thinking and approach to responding to people in crisis. Its excellent and wide-ranging work has laid the foundation for the future work of the new MHAAP.

The purpose of MHAAP is to review, provide advice and make recommendations to the Board on an annual basis, at a minimum, related to monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the new organizational mental health and addictions Strategy, and other matters related to policy involving mental health and addictions issues. The MHAAP will bring recommendations forward to the Board on a regular basis.

The MHAAP will include members of the Board, members of the Service and members of the community. The current co-chairs of the Mental Health Sub-Committee will become the co-chairs of MHAAP. It is also important that the membership reflect the diversity of Toronto with representatives from major, as well as more locally-based, groups or organizations serving youth and marginalized and racialized groups. An emphasis will also be placed on including individuals with both client-focused and direct lived experience of mental health and addictions issues; this includes lived experience in addictions or substance use, including harm reduction and service delivery, as well as those with expertise in the areas of law and human rights, accountability and data.

The members of MHAAP, through their lived experiences and through their community and organizational affiliations will assist the Board with engaging the larger community, especially the mental health and addictions community. MHAAP will also engage the larger community through community consultations and will solicit additional expertise and advice as needed.

Applications for MHAAP are open to the public and the Board encourages members of the community to share the information with their networks. The application process will remain open until the end of March. The application review process, as well as interviews, will take place in April and May, with a proposed list of MHAAP members being brought forward to the Board's June or July meeting. The first meeting of the new Mental Health and Addictions Advisory Panel is anticipated to take place in September 2019.

[Click here to access the MHAAP application](#)