

The Honourable Madeleine Meilleur  
Minister, Community Safety & Correctional Services  
18<sup>th</sup> Floor, 25 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, ON  
M7A 1Y6



May 18, 2011

Dear Minister Meilleur:

***Re: Ontario Police Review***

We are writing to you on behalf of the partner organizations of the Provincial Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee (HSJCC) and we commend you on your recent announcement to conduct a review of how police officers across the province respond to people with mental health disorders. We respectfully request an opportunity to present the findings of the HSJCC's Police & Mental Health Report to you and your staff at the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS). We believe that a number of the issues highlighted in our report may be of interest to you as you move forward with the Ontario police review.

***Background on the Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committees in Ontario***

The Provincial HSJCC is mandated by the *Provincial Strategy to Coordinate Human Services and Criminal Justice Systems in Ontario (1997)*, of which MCSCS is a signatory. The Provincial HSJCC was established to coordinate resources and services, and plan more effectively for people who are in conflict with the law. Priority consideration is for people with a serious mental illness, developmental disability, acquired brain injury, drug and alcohol addiction, and/or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Our role is to facilitate the exchange of information and promising practices, identify provincial level challenges, and work collaboratively with government to resolve challenges within the human services and justice sectors. The Provincial HSJCC consists of regional chairs representing their Regions and ex-officio members from important stakeholder groups.

Your ministry is represented by ex-officio members from both the community safety and the correctional services areas of MCSCS as well the Ontario Provincial Police. Other ex-officio members include the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and government representatives from the Ministries of Health and Long Term Care, Children and Youth Services, Community and Social Services, and the Attorney General. Correctional Services Canada is also represented.

The HSJCC network is comprised of fourteen Regional HSJCCs, 32 Local HSJCCs and one Provincial HSJCC, representing the work of over 600 volunteers involved in the human services and justice sectors. Each HSJCC is a voluntary collaboration between health, social service and community mental health and addictions organizations and partners from the justice sector, including police officers, correctional service providers, crown attorneys, and judges.

The Regional and Local HSJCCs coordinate communication and service integration planning among health, social services and criminal justice organizations within specific regions. Structurally, the Local

HSJCCs provide input to the fourteen Regional HSJCCs, which in turn provide input to the Provincial HSJCC. As well, the entire network of 47 committees supports knowledge transfer across the province.

For more information about the HSJCCs, please visit: <http://www.hsjcc.on.ca/> or contact us directly at the information provided below.

### ***About the HSJCC Police & Mental Health Report***

Across the province, the HSJCCs are working collaboratively with local and provincial police services to address the needs of Ontarians with mental disorders. For the past two years, the Provincial HSJCC has been engaged in a Police & Mental Health Project, and we are pleased to provide you with a copy of our recent report, *Police & Mental Health: A Critical Review of Joint Police and Mental Health Collaborations in Ontario*.

The attached report offers a provincial examination of issues related to police/mental health collaboration, and highlights successes and challenges of collaboration. Three key questions are addressed in the report: What legislation and policies impact on police/mental health collaboration? What types of police/mental health collaboration initiatives currently exist in Ontario? What are the issues related to police/mental health initiatives?

Our findings provide an understanding of the complexity of the interface between the criminal justice and mental health systems in Ontario. Many innovative solutions that are being applied to enhance police/mental health collaboration in Ontario are also profiled. The report findings present fifteen key issues relating to police/mental health collaboration:

1. Lack of comprehensive provincial policy for police/mental health collaboration
2. Increase in mental health diversion is needed
3. Lack of provincial standards for police/mental health education
4. Provincial guidelines for crisis intervention services should be monitored
5. Memorandums of understanding between hospitals and police services are needed
6. Lack of provincial protocol for sharing, collecting and disclosing client information
7. Provincial policy regarding the disclosure of mental health police records is needed
8. Lack of provincial policy regarding client transportation
9. Review of community treatment orders, Assertive Community Treatment Teams and safe bed programs is needed
10. Engaging multiple stakeholders is necessary to promote police/mental health collaboration
11. Shortage of funding and resources for police/mental health collaborations
12. Lack of mental health services in rural and northern communities
13. Anti-discrimination initiatives are needed to address mental health discrimination
14. Increased support is needed for vulnerable populations who face systemic barriers
15. Lack of Ontario-based research on police/mental health collaboration

Attention to the fifteen key issues identified in our report could improve police/mental health collaboration to better serve people with mental disorders. Several issues raised also echo the findings of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, as well as Ontario's ten year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

Thank you for considering this request to meet with you to discuss our recent Police & Mental Health Report. Please accept our congratulations on launching the Ontario Police Review.

We look forward to your response and to meeting with you as you embark on this critical endeavour.

Sincerely,



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Encl:

*Police & Mental Health: A Critical Review of Joint Police and Mental Health Collaborations in Ontario*

Also available online at: [http://www.hsjcc.on.ca/Uploads/PHSJCC\\_Police-MH\\_Final\\_Report\\_January\\_31\\_2011.pdf](http://www.hsjcc.on.ca/Uploads/PHSJCC_Police-MH_Final_Report_January_31_2011.pdf)