



Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2021
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present: Katie Almond (Co-chair) Riverdale Probation and Parole; Susan Davis, Gerstein Crisis Centre; Domenica Dileo HSJCC; Natasha Bartlett, Fred Victor; Debbie Lynch, CTYS; Judy Virgo, Fred Victor; Flora Matheson, Centre for Urban Health Solutions; Robin Cuff, CAMH Drug Treatment Court; Scott Skinner, Community Network of Specialized Care Toronto Region; Charlene Crews, Toronto Housing; Suzanne Lajambe, JHS Toronto; Courtney Miller, Operation Springboard; Ahmanhkyah Malcom-Witter, City of Toronto; Shane Rolland, Toronto Police Service (TPS); Catherine Wiseman-Hakes, Toronto Rehab Institute: McMaster University; Elaine Amsterdam, Gerstein Crisis Centre; Elizabeth Pereira, Legal Aid Ontario, Old City Hall; Jane Rumleskie, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services(MCCSS); Esther Daniel, Justice of the Peace; Mary Hogan, Judiciary; Cylene Rainville, LOFTS; Peter Moreira, Toronto Police Service; Carol ONeil, FCRP/CoSa Program Associate; Amanda Leo, Sherbourne Health; Leemor Valin, Legal Aid Ontario; Dara Gordon, Women’s College Hospital; Nick Harrilall, Sound Times

Regrets: Gord Reid, Toronto Police Service(TPS); Barbara Domenech, Cota; Tricia Dunbar, CHIRS; Maya Rehou, Operation Springboard; Kaelen Boyd, Institute for Advancement in Mental Health; Kiera Royle, YWCAToronto; Olusola Olumogba, DirectYouLife; Tanya Connors, CAMH; Jennifer Altosaar, Community Network of Specialized Care Toronto Region

Land Acknowledgement

Susan noted the Land Acknowledgement

Welcome and Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves

Review of January 7, 2021 Minutes

The minutes of January 7th were approved.

Review Action Items:

Action items were reviewed and completed.

Presentation: Amanda Leo, Sherbourne Health on the Encampment

The frontline worker call is a loose collective of frontline harm reduction workers who have organized to share information, strategize collaborative responses, and share resources when possible. It’s not an organization or operating body, but instead a group of folks who work with existing agencies working with people who use drugs and/or are homeless. Consequently, many folks on the call work to support folks staying in encampments across the City in various ways

through their orgs/programs. This group has been in existence for the past year and do NOT receive any kind of funding for this work.

- They have organized providing winter supplies to people at the encampment.
- There has always been encampments due to capacity issues. COVID has amplified these crises and the encampment situation has become more viable for people.
- These people are choosing to live outside because there are no options, ie. long waitlist for central intake and people having a negative experience in the shelters. People feel safer in the encampment because of their fear of getting COVID at the shelters due to the outbreaks there.
- The housing crisis has led to more people becoming homeless during COVID. For example, couch surfing under COVID is not possible.
- Encampments are one way people are self-organizing within a community they are comfortable with. Having shelter in Scarborough was not feasible for people who use injection sites that are available in the city core.
- It is important to note that people want housing not to bounce back and forth from the shelter system.
- Supporting people with what they need is an important starting point.
- Frost bite has been a main concern for people in the encampment this winter.

Themes discussed: Volunteers are playing an important role in filling in the gaps, providing blankets etc.... the privately made insulated shelters have helped some but what about the fires? How can we support otherwise? There was acknowledgement that some people do not want to be in congregated sites as well that we have an overdose crisis. Concerns were expressed regarding more funds needed for outreach support and permanent housing. How can we integrate meaningful engagement?

For more information or to get involved contact Amanda at: aleo@sherbourne.on.ca

Lunch and Learns

Domenica reported on the next virtual Lunch N' Learn that will take place on March 16th with Dr Trevor Morey and Leeann Trevors on *Living and Dying on the Streets: the Social Determinants of Palliative Care*. All Local HSJCC members were invited to attend.

Approval Workplan for 2021-2022

Themes discussed: How can we make section VI of the activities a measurable outcome to move beyond an analysis?

VI states: *To recognize, support and engage with Black and Indigenous communities.*

It was agreed that Domenica will revise this section making it actionable and circulate it for feedback.

It was agreed to continue with the Lunch N' Learns, TTC tokens and food vouchers budget, as well as supporting the technology needs for mental health diversion clients to access virtual court.

Flora Matheson made a motion to approve the workplan 2021-22 with changes to section VI, seconded by Judy Virgo and unanimously approved by the committee members. The workplan and budget will be finalized by the Toronto Regional HSJCC and then submitted to the Provincial HSJCC.

How is COVID-19 affecting service delivery in your organization, sector and/or community?

- Carol related the service challenges they are experiencing; newly released individuals who have internet restrictions can't attend online support groups or attend AA and/or NA groups. The literacy program can't access the library.
- Elizabeth advised that Legal Aid Ontario has a pilot project in the set date courts in GTA, so that Duty counsel is available to assist clients when they call into court. Legal Aid committed to this project for a minimum of 2 months, at least until end of March. As well, Duty Counsel has a virtual telephone number for clients who wish to have legal advice and disclosure review with Duty Counsel. When clients call Duty Counsel can use the ZOOM breakout room to meet with client. Court appearances have been postponed.
- Robin reported that they set-up a large meeting room at CAMH to hold court with PPE and clients are using Webx. Although, there are court delays, clients are coming to CAMH because they don't have the technology to attend virtual court from home.
- Justice Mary Hogan noted that many people are not appearing at court or connecting with Counsel. There appears to be a lack of understanding because of the many factors that are contributing to people not attending court or connecting with counsel. This maybe resulting in more people getting arrested.
- Shane Rolland noted that when bench warrants are issued for people with no fixed address you can't locate them to serve them.
- Peter Moreira noted that discrepancy bench warrants are being used in some cases. It was acknowledged that access to technology has been challenging but they are working on addressing this.
- It was acknowledged that there has been an increase in the remand population as well as the benefits of probleming solving regarding the backlog at the courthouses.
- Judy Virgo noted that many of these issues are being address at the mental health consortium.
- Leemor Valin noted that the Crown is asking for more bench warrants often as a result of losing contact with the client. He is suggesting perhaps to take everything into consideration before issuing a bench warrant. Having limited access to services and technology can lead to more problems for clients.
- Robin asked if we have a role to address systemically equity access mitigation framework similar to a health equity? It is also important to note that folks are also committing greater crimes during the pandemic because the lesser crimes like shoplifting are not as accessible.
- It was agreed to discuss at the next meeting having HSJCC meeting space on site at the New Toronto Courthouse (NTC). Who to approach about asking for space?

Agency/Organization Updates

Deferred to next meeting

Video Bail – no updates

Service Resolution/Coordination Issues:

Katie noted that there are top- up funds and that more information will be provided at the next meeting.

Updates from T-HSJCC and Provincial HSJCC:

Katie reported that planning has started for the virtual Provincial HSJCC 2021 conference. The Toronto Regional HSJCC meeting is scheduled to meet on March 8th.

Presenter for next meeting: TBD

Action Items:

- Domenica to revise section VI of the 2021/22 workplan based on members feedback.
- ***VI revised.*** *To improve the experience of equity seeking and racialized groups; recognize, support and engage with Black and Indigenous communities within the efforts of the Downtown Toronto HSJCC OR in accordance with the mandate of the Downtown Toronto HSJCC.*
- Domenica will plan logistics for the next Lunch N' Learn.
- Next meeting to discuss HSJCC meeting space at the New Toronto Courthouse.

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 6, 2021 (virtually) from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.