

**Hybrid Toronto Local HSJCCs Mega Meeting  
November 2, 2023 at 8:30 am to 10:30 am  
Microsoft Teams Meeting & 10 Armoury St, Toronto  
Meeting Room-B, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**In-person attendance:** Arthur McLuhan, Centre for Urban Health Solutions; Madison Ford, Centre for Urban Health Solutions; Brad Scarr, MNO; Bronte Shamata, YMCA; Susan Davis (Co-chair), Gerstein Centre; Catherine Wiseman-Hakes, Toronto Rehab Institute; McMaster University; Domenica Dileo, HSJCC; Elina Korchagina, LAO; Genieve Chin, Toronto Bail Program; Graham Barker, CMHA Toronto; Joyceline Sobers, Fred Victor; Natasha Barlett, Fred Victor; Nikita Moriarity, Reconnect; Patricia Pagnani (Co-chair), Toronto Bail Program; Rachel Ross-Vance, CMHA Toronto; Robert Koslowski, Peer Worker; Tina Bells, Salvation Army, Valerie Danieli, P-HSJCC Anti-Racism and PWLE Committees; Wendy Martin YMCA; Jason Balgopal, Crown Attorney's Office; Elaine Amsterdam, Gerstein Centre; Edward Kelly, Judiciary; Susanne Narciso, CRO/TSDC; Farzana Griffith (Co-chair), Toronto Bail Centre; Tammy Alston, CMHA Toronto; Brittany Hunter, CTYS

**Virtual attendance:** Flora Matheson, Centre for Urban Health Solutions; Leslie Morris, Fred Victor; Robin Cuff, CAMH; Rosanna George, Jean Tweed Centre; Elana Glass, LAO; Natasha Bronfman, Advocate; Amber Kellen, TNGCS; Althea Parkinson, Cota; Lindsay Jennings, Reintegration 101; Julie Osbelt, Toronto ABI Network; Sarah James, JHST; William Nakhid, Fred Victor; Greg McInnes, Salvation Army; Melissa Riddling, Cota; Maya Samila, SolGen TEDC; Kristina Mandic, Fred Victor; Melissa Maguire (Co-chair), SolGen; Joey Violante, YMCA; Kyra Schrader, MNO; Shannon Mason, SolGen at TEDC; Samantha Johnson, CTYS; Nick Harrilall, Sound Times; Tammy Tinney (Co-chair), NYGH; Marci Sharp, Salvation Army; Victoria Young, Cota; Laurie Snowden, VWAP; Nicole Jenkins, Cota; Falguni Shukla, Centennial College; Wendy Martin, YMCA; Rebecca Norlock, Habitat Services; Ivie Ataga, Substance Abuse Program for African Canadian & Caribbean Youth (SAPACCY); Maxine Dinham, Probation and Parole; Tonya Passi, LAO; Kristy Hazelton, Cota; Imtiaz Moursalien (Co-chair) Taibu; Wayne Burke, Fred Victor; Julianne Fernie, SolGen; Carol O'Neil, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario; Kristy Hazelton, Cota; Lamin Bagio, Fred Victor

**Regrets:** Dana Riley, EFry; Sara Fruchtman, CMHA Ontario

**Total attendance:** 66

Please note that there was representation from all of the four Toronto Local HSJCCs (Downtown Toronto, North York, Scarborough and West Toronto Local).

**Land Acknowledgement**

Susan Davis provided the Land Acknowledgement.

**Overview**

The hybrid HSJCC Mega Meeting brought together the four Toronto Local Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committees to discuss two major changes in the criminal justice system—the recent opening of the Toronto Regional Bail Centre and Ontario Court of Justice - Toronto.

Some overarching questions guided our discussion of the bail centre and downtown courthouse:

What's working well? What's not working well?

How have these changes impacted people who work in the system? How have these changes impacted people going through the system? How have these changes impacted community agencies? What should the Toronto Local HSJCCs focus on regarding service coordination, advocacy, and information gathering?

**Questions to consider:**

- 1) What's working well? For whom? With what impacts?
- 2) What's not working well? For whom? With what impacts?
- 3) What's next for us as the four Toronto Local HSJCCs?
  - a. What should we be doing from a service coordination perspective?
  - b. What should we be doing from an advocacy perspective?
  - c. What information gathering still needs to be done?

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Susan welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. In-person members introduced themselves, and the online members stated their names and organizations in the chat box. She introduced Sarah James from the John Howard Society; she will co-chair the Toronto Regional HSJCC with Susan and Tazio Clarke, City of Toronto.

Arthur McLuhan joined in person and facilitated the engagement there, and Flora joined virtually and facilitated the virtual engagement. Domenica monitored the virtual speakers list. Madison took notes in person on the board.

**Part 1 – Toronto Regional Bail Centre (TRBC)**

**1) What's working well? For whom? With what impacts?**

- Agency co-operation: gathering resources, creation of a client care room (emergency bus fare, snacks, clothing)
- Capacity increase

**2) What's not working well? For whom? With what impacts?**

- Transportation for clients
- After hour release
- Lack of referral streams/Lack of continuation
- Clients are unable to access services in a timely fashion. Previously seen in person, but is it happening now?
- Distance to bail court
- Length of session at bail court. More meaningless appearances via virtual
- Not being available to start on time leads to delays and late releases
- One of the main issues is transporting women from Vanier to the Toronto Regional Bail Centre. As the court is busy, some releases are not happening until the end of the day. We do not have the means to transport women to Vanier in the Mental Health Office. These women need more than a TTC pass as the GTA does not have this type of transport. Some women have keys to their homes or ID and their property at Vanier. While sometimes the property comes to TSDC - This does not always occur. We have vowed not to bring women to TRBC, but

when the technology is not working, we have no choice but to bring them to TRBC for an interview. We have all worked very hard to support those in custody, but this gap is still very prominent in the work we do

- Transfer prisoners' belongings when released at various points, Bail, police station or TSDC. Often, they do not have transportation, their house keys, wallets, medication or phone to get back home

#### Identified needs:

- Harm reduction support (legal) requires funding.
- TEDC only provides Naloxone kits; however, there are no other HR supplies available
- Partnership with the Works – provide kits.
- Community agencies have the supplies (I know we have them at the courthouse)- the point is that they have chosen not to have Naloxone as an essential life-saving tool. That is the stigma/discrimination and dangerous thing we are dealing with
- TSDC and TEDC phone access – trouble self-referring
- A long-term systemic solution to support the client's care room emergency supplies. Why are we relying on donations for bus fare when the distance to the TRBC requires systemic support?
- Clear referral pathways
- Sanitary products -needed donation.
- Advocate for in-person by getting defendants and services in-person.
- Lack of accountability in the system
- We have been asking for all these things since the mid 90's, re: transportation, clothes, Lack of HR. Even at the old Toronto Jail, we brought these issues forward.
- Caseloads are growing rapidly at the TRBC.
- Chronic issues with long-term treatment options, not accepting applications from incarcerated individuals and requiring a definitive release date.
- Who needs to be at the table to address the prisoners' belonging issues?
- Advocate for in-person court appearances and provide bail court in Scarborough.

#### What's next for us as the four Toronto Local HSJCCs?

Sense of Community

- Collaboration across agencies, communication, and sharing of resources
- Make solutions actionable
- Barrier: potential work with an outside organization
- The Works providing supplies & education
- Smaller ad hoc subcommittees – ongoing virtual for sharing conversation, docs, etc.
- Preference list for contacts of Directory of Network all in HSJCC
- Need a representative from the Ministry of Attorney General
- Implementation of HELPS Screener (TBI screening tool)

#### Part 2: Ontario Court of Justice - Toronto

What's working well?

- High support to high-need clients – Service providers can accompany and connect to a variety of services in the building

## 2) What's not working well? For whom? With what impacts?

- MNO not integrated – Metis-specific supports
- Courts often prioritize defence counsel rather than defendants
- Disorganization of the building- hybrid, not enough judges, clients cannot be online waiting all day to be seen, judges have been moved around - room changes
- People not going through mental health diversion – falling to the cracks, leading to a considerable disconnect
- Unfair expectations of case workers – referrals 45 minutes before release
- Client needs prioritization
- Lack of communication with the courts
- Referrals are for high-risk clients – unrealistic that these people will connect; they need to be connected to people who can help
- Referral used to come from Duty Counsel – not happening anymore
- Barriers to communication lead to breaking accessibility laws

### Identified needs:

- More clients in 806 courts – advocating for clients to be in a court that understands their needs
- Needs a clear pathway
- Efficiency in managing SP time
- Triage system – different system for in-person and virtual
- Separate for those represented and not represented
- The designated accessibility coordinator needs to be attending court
- Message system for the HSJCC to share information and thoughts in real-time
- Enabling communication between the SP and the crown
- ZOOM room set-up at the courthouse
- How to get high-needs clients in and out of court
- Rick Hansel Foundation accessibility training
- Advocacy
- Practical suggestions (ex-multiple cameras in the courtroom) so people can see each other when speaking
- Lack of consistent staffing – forcing treatment providers to overshare health information (ethical issues) or not share enough
- Information is inaccessible
- Saturated resources
- ABI assessment tool to be part of the intake process

### Who in the system can we provide suggestions?

#### **Concern: Unresponsive government**

- Developing a resource guide with agencies/services provided/staff contact name, etc./how to refer would be helpful to be shared among us
- There is a resource guide that grassroots people created, and it has been going on since COVID and gets updated quarterly at <https://incarceratedvoters.ca/resilient-reintegration>

If you want your organization added to the Ontario Prisoner Resource Guide, add your organization here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1EzmjNjoaT7aYtdkl-LPU9dMQPKmEKTmW4-amScLCuN4/edit>

- More people with lived experience in the HSJCC
- Discussion with MAG, Chief Justice and elected officials
- Letter writing
- Need to keep the conversation going
- Federal Advocacy Versus Provincial/focus on provincial

Participants noted that we were missing key players perspective such as duty counsel, the judiciary, the detention centres, court administrations, etc. These are the people who can make changes locally.