

## **Roehampton Residence Committee Report** **November 25, 2020**

In our bi-weekly meetings with city staff about the Roehampton Residence, we have asked for updates on the issue of whether a safe consumption site (SCS) would be placed in the residence. Our concern is that it could increase drug trafficking in the area, a potential safety issue and temptation for students at Northern.

In our last meeting, Gord Tanner informed us that there had been a Board of Health decision Nov 16 that would potentially result in the establishment of an overdose prevention room for residents at the Roehampton. This room would be used only for safe injection purposes, but it was not clear who would be responsible for supplying the drugs. We will continue to ask for updates and clarification.

The highlights of the history of the decision are:

1) The Board of Health (BOH) for the City of Toronto (6 councillors, 5 public members, 2 school board nominees) sets public health policy and advises City Council on a broad range of health issues and services.

The Medical Officer of Health made a report on the Opioid Poisoning Crisis in Toronto to the BOH Nov 5 that included this recommendation to address the crisis with background:

### **Recommendation: Expand harm reduction and treatment service capacity**

Background: In April 2020, Health Canada announced that provinces and territories were granted exemptions from the Controlled Drugs and Substance Act (CDSA) to temporarily operate urgent public health need sites (UPHNS), also referred to as overdose prevention sites. These exemptions are intended to help address the compounding effects of the opioid overdose crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic and are in effect until September 30, 2021. These UPHNS are faster to implement than traditional SCS and can be integrated into a wide range of settings. The BOH has called for expansion of SCS and overdose prevention sites in the past. It is therefore recommended that the BOH urge the provincial Minister of Health to create and fund an UPHNS program for Ontario to facilitate implementation of these life-saving services in a variety of settings.

The decision history and more information on the report is here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.HL23.2>

2) As a result, on Nov 16, the Board of Health

“Requested the Medical Officer of Health, in consultation with the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to continue to work with community partners toward urgently expanding the overdose prevention response and other harm reduction measures in shelters.”

The full BOH report is here: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-158017.pdf>