

**For Immediate Release
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Mental Health & Cities Summit releases preliminary recommendations for national and municipal action

More than 300 people attended the Mental Health & Cities Summit hosted by Mayor John Tory in Toronto today, where they produced a set of recommendations to advance a national conversation about urban mental health and the pressure it is putting on municipal residents, services and budgets.

The Summit, co-presented by the Wellesley Institute, CAMH, CivicAction, the Downtown Yonge BIA and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities featured breakout sessions facilitated by additional partners including the Mental Health Commission of Canada, Ryerson University, the University of Toronto, and the City of Toronto's Public Health and Social Development, Finance & Administration divisions.

Attendees produced a number of learnings and recommendations in relation to the following issues:

- Upstream Mental Health: What makes people well? What are the social determinants of mental health?
- Mental Health First Aid: How do we build capacity and break down barriers to support mental wellbeing in cities?
- Campus Mental Health: How do we identify mental health issues on campus and ensure students are accessing services in cities where they go to school?
- Mental Health in the Workplace: How can employers better identify and address mental health needs of their workforce?
- The Role of Data: What data do we have to tell our mental health stories? What's missing? How do we use data to support mental health policy development and service provision?
- Service Coordination: Mental health and addictions services, as well as other related human services, are delivered by numerous service providers many of which are funded by federal, provincial and/or municipal governments. The lack of coordination and collaboration is resulting in the needs of many residents going unmet and an ineffective use of resources.

Learnings and recommendations include:

- Prioritized and accelerated federal funding for the creation of proper, safe, and affordable permanent and supportive housing, identified as a major determinant of mental health in Canadian cities;

- Introduction of national benchmarked goals for creation of supportive housing and the end of overdose deaths;
- Development of clear, regular and standardized reporting of mental health related data across the country;
- Introduction of robust Mental Health First Aid programming in Canadian cities through leadership of public and private sector employers and post-secondary institutions;
- Creation or expansion of municipal mental health portals that consolidate information about existing and available resources for the public and front-line service providers;
- Improved national sharing of best practices on municipal programs that improve service coordination, such as Toronto's SPIDER (Specialized Program for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness) - a partnership between 26 City divisions and community agencies designed to reduce complex unresolved health and safety risks for vulnerable Torontonians;
- Introduction of municipal mental health strategies (where they have not already been created) that coordinate actions and services across divisions and agencies;
- Provincial and federal recognition that cities are at the front line of mental health needs and service delivery;
- The inclusion of municipal representatives in federal and provincial decision making related to healthcare funding, including mental health.

Mayor Tory will also enlist support from other Canadian mayors to urge Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to put the topic of mental health on this June's G7 Summit in La Malbaie, Quebec.

The Mental Health & Cities Summit brought together politicians, academics, front-line practitioners, employers, and those who see and feel the impact of mental health in their communities every day, with a mandate to identify and drive areas for impact and change.

It featured Ontario Health Minister Helena Jaczek and Mayors from across Canada including: Gregor Robertson of Vancouver; Bonnie Crombie of Mississauga; Danny Breen of St. John's, Drew Dilkens of Windsor, and Berry Vbranovic of Kitchener. They were joined by Poppy Jaman, CEO of City Mental Health Alliance UK; Kwame McKenzie of the Wellesley Institute; and City of Toronto's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Eileen de Villa, among others.

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