



Thunder Bay District Health Unit

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TBDHU.COM

October 3, 2024

Mayor and Council
City of Thunder Bay
500 Donald St. East
Thunder Bay, ON
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Subject: Letter of Support for the Municipality's Human Rights- Based Community Action Plan to Address Encampments

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) I am writing to express our support for the City's comprehensive Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan to address encampments. This initiative represents a crucial and well-structured approach to addressing the pressing challenges of unsheltered homelessness in our community and aligns with our shared commitment to fostering safety, well-being, and dignity for all residents.

We strongly endorse key components of the plan, including:

- **Specialized Encampment Management Team** that will ensure timely responses to community concerns, coordinate sanitation services, and maintain safe conditions.
- **Permissible Encampment Areas** that provide essential services in controlled environments, which will greatly reduce strain on community resources and improve conditions for encampment residents.
- **Enhanced Cleanup and Sanitation:** Implementing regular cleanup and sanitation services to maintain health and safety in encampments.
- **Advocacy to Provincial and Federal Governments** to secure the funding and policy changes needed to address homelessness in a sustainable way.
- **Integration of Lived Experience Voices**, ensuring that the decisions made are rooted in the real-life experiences of those directly affected by unsheltered homelessness.

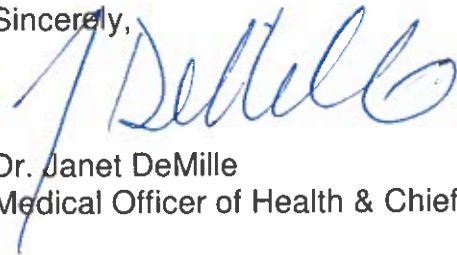
Of particular importance to the success of the plan is the **Specialized Encampment Management Team** and **Enhanced Cleanup and Sanitation**. A well-resourced response team is critical to mitigating the potential for serious health and safety risks to encampment residents and the broader community.

At TBDHU we are particularly encouraged by the municipality's commitment to collaborative work with community partners. We believe that by uniting our resources, expertise, and services, we can achieve meaningful and lasting change. We stand ready to contribute to the efforts of this plan through regular outreach visits, providing harm reduction supplies and sharps disposal support, supporting residents with connections to housing and other resources, and helping identify and mitigate the effects of encampment health hazards.

The innovative and comprehensive nature of this plan sets a strong foundation for a coordinated response to homelessness and encampments, one that prioritizes compassion, efficiency, and long-term success. We believe this initiative will not only improve outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness but also enhance the overall well-being of our community.

In support of this plan, we look forward to working alongside the municipality, the Specialized Encampment Management Team, and other community partners to ensure its successful implementation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Janet DeMille
Medical Officer of Health & Chief Executive Officer