

September 27, 2024

Mayor and Council
City of Thunder Bay
500 Donald St. East
Thunder Bay, ON P7E 5K4

Subject: Letter of Support for the Municipality's Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan to Address Encampments

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of St. Joseph's Care Group, I am writing in support for the City's comprehensive action plan to address encampments. This initiative represents a crucial and well-structured approach to addressing the immediate 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 the key components of the plan, including:

- **Permissible Encampment Areas** that provide essential services in controlled environments, which will greatly reduce strain on community resources and improve conditions for encampment residents.
- **Temporary Village Sheltering Units** that offer not only immediate indoor sheltering, but also the wrap-around services necessary to help individuals stabilize and transition to long-term solutions.
- **Specialized Encampment Management Team** that will ensure timely responses to community concerns, coordinate sanitation services, and maintain safe conditions.
- **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.

At St. Joseph's Care Group, 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 access to our full continuum of care for mental health and addiction services including, withdrawal management, supportive housing, treatment and mental health outpatient services.

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 full support of this plan, we look forward to working alongside the municipality and other community partners to ensure its successful implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'a d'.

Andrea Docherty
Vice President, Clinical and Community Health
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