

February 24, 2023

Dear Strategic Priorities and Policies Committee,

It's been over three weeks since the Health and Homelessness summit. We write to you on behalf of the School of Social Work at King's University College to pledge our support for your initiative to bring together service providers and policy makers to the table in addressing the problems we face. We are acutely aware of the homeless crisis in the City of London; one that has only intensified and continues to do so.

Our system is in dire need of repair. The number of homeless individuals in the community are increasing at an alarming rate, in tandem with mental health issues and addictions. The extreme demand for services far outweighs the current capacity of agencies to effectively address those needs. Therefore, we are excited by the synergy and ideas brought forward by the hundreds of participants during the summit to look at new and collaborative ways of delivering programs and services to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Each year, the School of Social Work at King's University College trains and graduates dozens of high-quality professionals (BSW's and MSW's) eager to support a community in need. These new and soon-to-be Social Workers are critical assets to securing a way forward concerning these issues.

King's University College is working on the creation of a program that can collaborate with organizations in London in response to the homelessness crisis. We want to evolve our King's Community Support Centre that has already started at the Salvation Army, Centre of Hope. The new partnership offers students practical counselling experience while providing support to individuals and families impacted by homelessness, substance use recovery, mental health, and other traumas.

King's School of Social Work's Field Education program is inviting a partnership to provide social work support through an expanded Community Support Centre. Under direct clinical supervision, the "Centre" would provide counselling to address more complex mental health and addictions issues, program development, system navigation and community coordination in an effort to respond to the significant demand for service and resulting wait lists from existing programs. Initial work would include a needs assessment of existing community services to ascertain gaps that could be supported through this partnership. This initiative is intended to

align with the strategic plans of King's and the City of London in supplementing existing community services, while offering options for more extensive human services support. King's University College and fellow partners stand ready to be a part of the solution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Patel', written in a cursive style.

School of Social Work, King's University College