

**MAYOR PATRICK BROWN**

April 14, 2023

The Honourable. Michael Tibollo  
Associate Minister of Mental Health and AddictionsSent via: [michael.tibollo@ontario.ca](mailto:michael.tibollo@ontario.ca)The Honourable Sylvia Jones  
Deputy Premier, and Minister of HealthSent via: [Sylvia.Jones@ontario.ca](mailto:Sylvia.Jones@ontario.ca)**Re: Youth Mental Health in Brampton**

Dear Minister Jones and Minister Tibollo,

I would like to start by thanking you for your delegation to the Region of Peel council on April 13, 2023. My colleagues and I welcome the opportunity to discuss the mental health crisis we are facing in the Region of Peel and the City of Brampton and appreciate your government's commitment to funding for the Peel Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Centre of Excellence and other Mental Health.

Ministers, as discussed at the Regional Council meeting another key area of crisis in mental health in our youth. We welcome the commitment from Minister Tibillo to attend a roundtable in Peel Region on youth mental health and see this a first step in a long journey ahead to get the supports we need in our community.

In January 2020, Brampton City Council declared a health care emergency. Our community continues to experience significant health care capacity pressures due to Brampton's rapid population growth, aging demographics, high prevalence of chronic disease, and historical funding inequities. While we appreciate and welcome the recent provincial investments in our city's health care infrastructure and services, Brampton's need for health care and hospital services continues to outpace current capacity.

Mental health presents a growing challenge for our health care system with complex and growing needs for support across our community. The Children's Mental Health Ontario's (CMHO) report titled "Kids Can't Wait" showed Peel Region as among the highest in wait times in the province, reaching as high as 566 days for counselling and therapy for those under 18 years old, for more intensive mental health services the wait is even longer reaching 737 days,

**RECEIVED****April 14, 2023**REGION OF PEEL  
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERKREFERRAL TO \_\_\_\_\_  
RECOMMENDED \_\_\_\_\_  
DIRECTION REQUIRED \_\_\_\_\_  
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED  \_\_\_\_\_



## **MAYOR PATRICK BROWN**

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or over two years. CMHO considered Peel a "hot spot" for long wait times because funding for many mental health services has not kept pace with the Region's population increase in recent years with 90 percent of that growth occurring in Brampton.

Peel Region's own data demonstrates that the mental health and addictions system in Peel is challenged with growing waitlists and unmet community needs. On April 13, 2023 the Region of Peel passed a motion introduced by Councillor Rowena Santos, asking that Peel Region enhance communication and collaboration with school boards to enable access to supports for youth in crisis. This motion is an important step in the crisis but Peel Region needs more help from the Ontario government:

- Only one in three Peel residents are expected to receive mental health or addictions treatment or services when they need it, which leaves an estimated 184,000 Peel residents (including just over 60,000 children and youth) without the necessary interventions they need.
- Substance-related harms continue to increase in Peel with 654 lives lost between 2017 and 2021. In 2021, there was a 133% increase in deaths compared to 2017. Responding to drug toxicity related harms is a top priority for Peel Public Health and community partners.
- The Region of Peel chronic under-funding for mental health support is evident when looking at the per capita funding (2019) that was calculated to be \$48 and \$36 per resident for Central West and Mississauga Halton LHINs respectively, which is significantly lower than the per capita funding of \$80 for other Ontarians.
- The funding inequity also impacts child and youth mental health services wherein Peel's average per capita funding for child and youth mental health is significantly lower at \$76.38, while average per capita funding in Ontario is \$152.48.

Despite ongoing advocacy by the Region, the City of Brampton and local community system partners, there continues to be an inequity in provincial funding for mental health and addictions services in the Peel service area.

The Region of Peel, Public Health report titled "Changing Landscape of Health in Peel" (2019) identified Emergency Department (ED) visits for mental health to be the highest among youth under age 24 (more than doubled over the same time period for youth under 14) and individuals who accessed care for a mental illness had 3 or more repeat hospitalizations. The same report found that incidents of suicide/self harm have increased significantly among female youth under age 24 and discovered that 33% of students in Grades 7–12 (44% for females) did not know who to turn to when needing to discuss a mental health issue.

## **MAYOR PATRICK BROWN**

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The limited access to mental health supports for students, result in them turning to their schoolteachers and administrative staff for support but staff lack the professional training to address or keep up with demand. Unlike other School Boards across the province (such as the Upper Grand School Board which provides specific psychological and mental health services) the Peel District School Board and Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, do not adequately provide mental health supports for students in crisis. On Feb 15, 2023, the Peel District School Board hosted an Advisory Council Meeting regarding the development of their Mental Health Strategy and flagged collaboration with other levels of government as an urgent priority.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) launched the “Act of Mental Health Campaign” pressing our national leaders to fund mental health care, recognizing that kids are getting sicker, and increasingly post-pandemic, because they cannot receive mental health care when they need it and are winding up in Emergency Departments and in hospital because their mental health is not treated soon enough.

In October 2020 the Region of Peel Council approved the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, with a focus to use upstream approaches to tackle systems-level challenges including family violence, mental health, addictions, and systemic discrimination. Recently Peel’s Community Safety and Well-Being Mental Health and Addictions Action Table, comprised of over 15 organizations, put forth a pre-budget submission with the following recommendations:

- Ensure provincial health human resource policies and compensation practices are supportive of building and retaining a robust Peel MHA workforce and repeal the Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019.
- Increase funding for MHA in Peel to meet population needs, correct for historical underfunding, and tackle unprecedented crisis level demand.
- Provide sustained funding and approvals for consumption and treatment services to combat the drug toxicity crisis impacting Peel.

The City of Brampton Community Safety and Well-being Action Plan approved in September 2022, is committed to enhancing community resilience through cross-sector engagement, collaboration, and advocacy. It clearly identifies increasing mental health supports and programming, especially for children and youth and considers the growing challenges felt by this demographic during the pandemic. Brampton also works closely with key partners such as

**MAYOR PATRICK BROWN**

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the Algoma University, which is planning to establish a Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute in our City.

Furthermore, the City is developing two youth hubs dedicated to supporting and empowering Brampton's youth. A crucial component of that work is support for the provincial government to ensure adequate supports and ongoing programs are available to Brampton youth to mitigate and address root causes of mental health crisis in our community.

The mental health crisis in Brampton and across Peel Region is rooted in decades of underfunding and unprecedented population growth that have continuously challenged our health care system and support services.

The 2023 Ontario Budget commits \$425 million over three years for mental health and addictions services. I call on the provincial government to specifically increase mental health funding and supports for youth in Brampton, and to work with the City of Brampton, the Region of Peel, our local school boards, and all relevant stakeholders to ensure coordinated and holistic action is taken on improving mental health in our community.

I look forward to working with you to support our youth in this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Patrick Brown  
Mayor, City of Brampton

cc:

Peel District School Board  
Dufferin Peel Catholic School Board  
Regional Council  
Brampton MPPs

**Attachments: City of Brampton Motion, Region of Peel Motion**

### **CW053-2023**

Whereas, youth mental health was hitting a crisis point in Peel before Covid, as demonstrated by research in 2019 and expressed locally at a round table hosted in February 2020, with a number of school administrators, staff and teachers, the Mayor, local Councillors, community agencies and representatives from Region of Peel and the City of Brampton;

Whereas, Children's Mental Health Ontario's (CMHO) report titled "Kids Can't Wait" showed Peel among the highest in wait times in the province, reaching as high as 566 days for counselling and therapy for those under 18 years old and even longer wait times for more intensive mental health services, reaching 737 days, or over two years;

Whereas, CMHO considered Peel a "hot spot" for long wait times because funding for many mental health services hasn't kept pace with booms in the region's population over the years;

Whereas, the report titled "Changing Landscape of Health in Peel" (2019) identified Emergency Department (ED) visits for mental health, highest among youth under age 24 (more than doubled over same time period among individuals younger than 14 years) and individuals who accessed care for a mental illness had 3 or more repeat hospitalizations;

Whereas, the same report found that suicide/self harm have increased significantly among female youth under age 24 and discovered that 33% (44% for females) of students in Grades 7–12 did not know who to turn to when wanting to discuss a mental health issue;

Whereas, limited access to mental health supports for students, result in them turning to their school teachers and administrative staff for support but such staff lack the professional training to address or keep up with demand for support;

Whereas, as recently as last fall, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) launched the "Act of Mental Health Campaign" pressing our national leaders to fund mental health care, recognizing that kids are getting sicker, and increasingly post-pandemic, because they can't get mental health care when they need it and are winding up in Emergency Departments and in hospital because their mental health isn't treated soon enough;

Whereas, the Region of Peel continues to be chronically under-funded for mental health support whereby per capita funding (2019) was calculated to be \$48 and \$36 for Central West and Mississauga Halton LHINs, respectively, which is significantly lower than the per capita funding of \$80 for Ontarians;

Whereas, In October 2020 the Region of Peel Council approved the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, with focus to use upstream approaches to tackle systems-level challenges: family violence, mental health and addictions, and systemic discrimination.

Whereas, the City of Brampton has Council and staff representation at the Region of Peel Community Safety and Wellbeing Committee with a separate sub-committee focusing on mental health;

Whereas, the City of Brampton Community Safety and Wellbeing action plan approved in September 2022, is committed to enhancing community resilience through cross-sector engagement, collaboration, and advocacy which clearly identifies: Increased mental health supports and programming, especially for children and youth, considering the growing challenges faced by this demographic during the pandemic;

Whereas Mississauga's youth hub based in Malton provides youth with access to mental health support and the City of Brampton is developing two youth hubs with potential to do the same;

Whereas, Algoma University is planning to establish a Mental Health and Addictions Research and Training Institute in Brampton;

Whereas, unlike other School Boards across the province (such as the Upper Grand School Board which provides specific psychological and mental health services) the Peel District School Board and Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, do not adequately provide mental health supports or access to support for students, especially those in crisis;

Whereas, on Feb 15, 2023 the Peel District School Board hosted an Advisory Council Meeting regarding the development of their Mental Health Strategy and highlighted collaboration with other levels of government as a priority;

Therefore Be It Resolved:

1. The City engage in the following advocacy measures:
  - a. Mayor, on behalf of Council write letters to Federal and Provincial Ministers of Mental Health and Addictions (Bennett and Tibollo respectively), and cc: to the Peel District School Board, Dufferin Peel Catholic School Board, Regional Council, and local MPPs and MPs, regarding the need for increased mental health funding and support for youth in Brampton and that the letter include a link to this agenda item, this motion, and related correspondence in the agenda;

- b. A meeting be scheduled with Minister Tibollo, School Board Trustees, Mayor and members of Council regarding mental health support for youth in Brampton;
- c. Council advocate to the Peel District School Board to collaborate with the City, Region and social support agencies in order to improve immediate mental health support needs for youth in Brampton;
- d. Council advocate to Minister Tibollo and School Boards to implement a model of mental health support similar to Upper Grand School Board where trained mental health workers are allocated to schools, especially for those most in need (<https://www.ugdsb.ca/programs/special-education/student-support-and-program-services-department/>);
- e. Council advocate to Region of Peel to enhance communication related to access to the Region's community response table so schools can access immediate support for youth in crisis;
- f. A meeting to be scheduled with the Region of Peel Community Safety and Well-Being Executive Leadership Members and the School Boards to discuss opportunities for collaboration at the Community Safety and Well-Being Mental Health and Addictions Action Table.
- g. Possible collaboration with the CSWB System Leadership Table, Algoma University and other relevant stakeholders to host a Youth Mental Health Summit or Roundtable in Brampton.

2. The City action the following:

- a. Community Safety and Well-Being Office to join the Peel District School Board's planning process in the development of their Mental Health Strategy; and
- b. Provide an update on Brampton's Youth Hubs and support/programming related to youth mental health.

A recorded vote was requested and carried unanimously, as follows:

Yea (11): Mayor Patrick Brown, Regional Councillor Santos , Regional Councillor Vicente , Regional Councillor Brar, Regional Councillor Palleschi, Regional Councillor Keenan, Regional Councillor Medeiros, Regional Councillor Fortini , City Councillor Power, Regional Councillor Toor, and Deputy Mayor Singh

Carried (11 to 0)

Note: Later in the meeting, as Deputy Mayor Singh experienced technical difficulties during the recorded vote, the vote was amended to reflect Deputy Mayor Singh voted "Yea".

## Resolution

**Agenda Number:** 20.1  
**Date:** April 13, 2023

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**Moved by** Councillor Santos

**Seconded by** Councillor Palleschi

Whereas the City of Brampton in its correspondence dated March 6, 2023 regarding youth mental health has requested that Peel Region enhance communication and collaboration with school boards to enable access to supports for youth in crisis;

Therefore be it resolved:

1. That the Regional Chair, on behalf of Regional Council, write a letter to the Peel District School Board and Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board in support of increased collaboration with Peel Region to improve mental health support for children and youth and students across the region; and
2. That a list of children and youth mental health support services available across the region be provided to the school boards for distribution to all school principals across the region, as an attachment and referenced in the letter; and
3. That Peel Region engage in discussions with the school boards to better understand gaps in information and opportunities to increase awareness of available children and youth mental health services, including Peel's Situation Table; and
4. That a copy of the correspondence, and letter to the school boards be forwarded to the Community Safety and Well Being Mental Health (CSWB) and Addictions Action Table for consideration; and
5. That staff report back to Regional Council by the end of 2023, on further recommendations on how to improve support specifically for children, youth and students in the region.

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Regional Chair