

Motion

Agenda Number: 22.1

Date: July 9, 2020

Moved by Councillor Damerla

Seconded by Councillor Downey

Whereas the tragic death of Ejaz Choudry has once again highlighted the shortcomings of how we deal with people living with mental health issues who are experiencing a crisis both here in the Region of Peel and in the Province of Ontario;

And whereas, after every tragic death of a mentally ill person involving a police encounter, there are calls to do better, the focus too often is on improving police response, despite the broad recognition that mental health is not a policing issue and people in mental health crisis require health care;

And whereas, the Police services themselves have repeatedly said, that mental health is not a policing issue;

And whereas, Peel Regional Police (PRP) has seen a 31 per cent increase in Requests for Assistance for Mental Health since 2015;

And whereas, in Peel, an estimated 276,000 residents could experience a mental health and/or substance disorder, yet only one in three receive the treatment that they need;

And whereas, the Region of Peel has committed to advocate for an equitable funding model to enhance supports and improve access to mental health and addictions services in Peel;

And whereas, in recognition of the above, the Canadian Mental Health Association – Peel Dufferin and PRP established a Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team (MCRRT), which partners a Crisis Worker (Registered Nurse, Registered Social Worker or Occupational Therapist) with a specially trained police officer to respond to 911 calls for those in a mental health crisis;

And whereas, the MCRRTs are an excellent step in the right direction but are not as effective as they can be because:

- a) Police continue to be the authority under the *Mental Health Act* during any intervention and act as de facto leaders; and,
- b) MCRRTs are inadequately funded to respond to the number of mental health crisis calls in Peel so mental health crisis situations continue to be primarily addressed through a police-led response;

And whereas, the time has come to do better by not just focusing on better policing as we have done in the past, but by reducing our reliance on policing to respond to mental health crisis situations and instead empower and enable teams like MCRRTs to respond to and intervene in mental health crisis situations in Peel;

Therefore be it resolved, that the Region of Peel commits, through collaboration and in the spirit of mutual respect between all involved agencies including Peel Regional Police, community safety and mental health agencies, and the Community Safety and Well-Being Tables, to report back to Regional Council with:

- 1) A plan to increase the number of MCRRT units in Peel; and,
- 2) Improvements to the delivery model, including making mental health workers the lead, or at the very least, an equal partner during a joint police and mental health response to a mental health crisis situation, when appropriate;

And further, that the Region of Peel advocate to the provincial government for changes to the *Mental Health Act* that would allow for mental health services to have authority to intervene and act as leaders in mental health crisis situations, when appropriate;

And further, that the Region of Peel advocate to the provincial government for the redeploying of resources saved from reducing reliance on policing to address mental health to MCRRT and other crisis supports or support new resourcing and funding for MCRRT units alongside other crisis measures.

Regional Chair