

All Party Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use, and Addictions Meeting Minutes

Date: June 19, 2024

Time: 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Attendees:

Committee Members: Tom Osborne, Paul Pike, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Perry Trimper, Joedy Wall, Jim McKenna, and Lela Evans

Officials: John McGrath, Gillian Sweeney, Niki Legge, Maggie O'Toole, Stephanie Wold

1. Minutes approved from June 12, 2024.
2. Other Business:
 - Discussed next steps for meeting dates and times
 - Confirmed approval of the questionnaire
3. Presentation – Paul Davis and Kim Grant gave an overview of the services offered through The Gathering Place, a community-based organization, which includes a low-barrier shelter and community health services. Noted were the current demographics and trends for individuals accessing services: an increased number of individuals with increased complexity, more females, as well as younger and older populations (seniors). Discussion included: improving access to programming when people are ready for detox/treatment and ensuring policies support that access; work that the Gathering Place does to integrate guests/members into the community; and work ongoing with funding from the federal government as it relates to data collection and being able to show outcomes from current programs.

Areas for improvement included: Focusing on the social determinants of health (including basic income); providing integrated health and housing approaches; providing intensive case management and assertive engagement; offering safe consumption/overdose prevention sites; addressing obstacles in program policies; and providing a continuum of housing options (sober, transitional; harm-reduction) with wraparound supports.

Three areas to address immediately: looking at current policy to improve access, including ensuring services are available when somebody identifies they are ready for detox/treatment; more outreach and integrated services to meet basic needs and develop connections; and considering safety today including safe consumption sites.

4. Action Items:
 - Secretariat to follow up on harm reduction options in detox centres (simultaneous substance use)
 - Secretariat will follow up on options for a half-day session on one (or both) of July 10th and July 17th