

Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service System Planning Forum

Date and time: September 13, 2023; 10:00am – 12:00pm

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81540086227>

1. Shelter System Updates – Shelter System Flow Data Highlights – Trish Lenz, Manager, Coordinated Access, SSHA

Overview – July data [Shelter System Flow Data – City of Toronto](#)

1 to long term care

Shelter and homelessness housing placement program outcomes.

62 people left the shelter through the RRHI program.

Majority of people were 25 – 64.

Majority are men and 65

Please see deck for more information.

Q - So are we seeing a massive decline in housing placements, or did I misunderstand that chart?

A - Significant drop because COHB had reached capacity.

Now that COHB is relaunched, we anticipate the numbers will go up again.

Q just want to flag that the COHB program does not include people who live in transitional housing. Because of shelters being over capacity, the traditional paths for transitional housing residents such as private market, supportive or alternative housing providers like Ecuhome no longer have the capacity to house transitional housing residents. We are now housing people beyond their time limit.

We want it noted that people are stabilized in transitional housing but that they have usually just exited the shelter system and our programs are those that they benefit from. We need to be included in the continuum.

And we appreciate the support at SSHA for transitional housing programs!

Q - Do you know how much funding is being provided in COHB?

A - This news release provides info: the City and Province are investing a joint \$13.4m starting this summer, and calling on the federal government to invest an additional \$26m –

<https://www.toronto.ca/news/city-of-toronto-and-province-of-ontario-invest-in-canada-ontario-housing-benefit-to-provide-housing-for-people-experiencing-homelessness-including-asylum-seekers/>

The allocation was 13.5 M – ran out in 2 months. – the reinvestment is 13.4M from province and city and a call for the federal govt to put in 26M

Q - Does the City have data on housing placements broken down by whether the person/family was a refugee or non-refugee?

A - There is a breakdown – will distribute it in the slide deck.

Q - is the data separated out by those who get housing from the centralized waitlist?

A - 23 from centralized waitlist.

Q/comment – we had 108 families in 2022 using COHB. Many in the downtown shelters – refugee women met with the new minister – Marc Miller, to educate him on what the issues are to move people out to make spaces. He seemed to understand.

Q– what data do we have that could show what future trends of what may be happening? We have a massive backlog at the LTB which they say will be cleared in the next 16 months. Is there a way for us to capture when refugees are coming and around capturing data around evictions from the LTB. To plan for the future. how can we use it to plan?

A - From the SSHA perspective – we are working on some demand forecasting to figure out increased demand that will include market trends and eviction rates. Looking at getting better data from the federal govt. Learning from other cities, promising practices.

A – HS perspective - We don't know if there is another round of RHI coming up and more money around the National Housing strategy trends around rental housing development market and how that has the affordable rental market - We are working with the LTB about renovations in the LTB. Can share what the work looks like with the meeting notes.

- [Brief-2-Non-Arrears-Eviction-Application-FINAL.pdf \(wellesleyinstitute.com\)](#)
- [Renovictions - Attachment 1 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

TAEH and partners and TICAB just submitted our most recent community homelessness report - 5 different indicators in tracking homelessness. Good tool to highlight support and resources. Gets posted in the next month or two.

Q/comment - Andrew Heights from StatsCan – on the 26th of September is coming to Toronto and it would be great if folks from SSHA and HS would also attend. Looking for more data and is curious about local level data. Siu Mee - will send a reminder to SSHA.

Q What about the Provincial Government stepping up to change Rent Control policies, especially looking at builds after 2018?

A - agree that this needs to be a priority.

2. City of Toronto's Refugee Response – Vera Dodic, Project Director, SSHA

Great Resource

Indigenous Peoples in Toronto An Introduction for Newcomers

<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/9869-IG-TNO-Online-Compressed.pdf>

Late March and closure of Roxham road – assumption that asylum claims would have dropped. The number of inland claims increased. Also number of port of entry claims increased significantly.

- In 2022, there were 25,000 asylum claims
- In the first six months of 2023 there were 27,000

- # of refugee claimants has accelerated – now more than 3,400 asylum seekers in the shelters.
- Also 1,300 other asylum seekers are housed through other programs like hotels and other temp accommodations.
- We predict 4,500 refugee claimants will be in the system by the end of 2023 that will be 50% of the shelter residents.

SSHA measures to respond to increase.

- Internal tables that have been put in place to facilitate that coordination. Weekly table with the Mayors' Office.
- Expanded capacity to 250 hotel beds with Red Cross.
- Used COHB to support for 1350 HH move out of the shelter
- Have been supporting churches for African claimants.
- Recently prioritized supporting Revivaltime Tabernacle Church in moving 82 people to City spaces.
- Enhanced the donateTO website and have been promoting the this.
- Intensified intergovernmental advocacy including regional engagement.
- Established a trilevel table including IRCC - meeting to discuss solutions – the table has facilitated some concrete actions.
- IRCC did a site visit to Peter street and 5800 Yonge St. went to each city site and churches to meet with claimants and offer support in filing complaints the making applications for work permits and refugee status.
- 26 claimants have been moved from Dominion church last Friday.
- Planning another transfer to Cornwall for another 50 rooms.
- Last week report from City Manager – recommendations from report unanimously adopted by council [Agenda Item History - 2023.EX7.2 \(toronto.ca\)](#)
 - To provide full reimbursement of 200 M in expected costs. The 97 M is only partially going to cover the expenses.
 - Further request for IHAP to address the estimated in annual costs in 2024
 - Request increase in COHB allocations.
 - Proposed to the Fed govt to fund the reception centre in the GHTAA area

At the staff level we are in frequent conversations at the bureaucratic level.

Going to establish a new table on the intergovernmental plan to respond to large scale arrivals and for the reception centre. Hoping for the idea to become a reality.

Q – comment – people are still waiting for IRCC to come back to the shelters to take on more cases as the demand is there. 90% of our clients are now refugee claimants. We got to meet with Marc Miller. Trending and forecasting – keenly interested – we are still turning away women. We have never turned away 500 women in a year. Please share trending data

Q concerns about anti immigrant sentiment. While all these funding issues are being decided. Need some interim solutions whilst funding is being decided. Staff are worn out working through the pandemic and now they are faced with an increased demand for their support and services and are really burnt out.

A- each new wave of refugee arrivals is different. We are not very good at anticipating things.

Q –Is there some broader demand modeling for the shelter system as a whole? That would be really helpful, as opposed to a reactive approach

A- I agree with Mina - the statement of state of emergency is really important to be backed up with immediate action.

One good change that has been made recently was to change access to TCHC from 1 in 7 to 1 in 5 from the DA code.

National Housing Day of Action – November 22 – Siu Mee Cheng, Executive Director, Street Haven

- The National Housing Day of Action coming up in November 22nd
- Want to make it available to all.
- Inviting everyone who does attend to schedule a meeting with their local MP – this is budget time right now so it's a good time to bring as many people as we can. We had a good one in March and this time we are trying to be proactive.
- We are asking you to share your stories – to ask local MPP's to ask of government.

Q - Where is ONPHA?

A - We did invite them and they provided a cool response.

Q - Would “we” (ONPHA members in GTA) want to press ONPHA about their response?

Suggesting that we write a letter to ask about their response to this. Make sure that ONPHA represents the GTA members. Suggestion that Victor can start this initiative. Can get TAEH support to get the table. Have already reached out to Nadine.

Q – is this day geared towards the spectrum? Not just the refugee issue.

Jean agreed to contact the Coop Federation and National Coop issues.

Q – Can we also carry out a campaign with Metro Tenants Association to remove the 2018 law to remove rent control from buildings built after 2018?

- The policy positions that we had originally put forward in March and they are still relevant and current.
- Another recommendation – is that we recommend that a multi stakeholder table be established to support their 2023 budget homelessness plan and housing plan.

It would be good to see what we could do at the national level.

Action: those interested in working on the campaign to address the provincial Rent control policy – please reach out to Savhanna .

Ku-gaa-gii pimitizi-win COVID-19 Cohort Study: Early Research Findings and Policy Implications – Dr. Stephen Hwang, Director, MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, Unity Health Toronto

Overview

<https://maphealth.ca/ku-gaa-gii-pimitizi-win/>

- Conducted a longitudinal cohort study where we collected data from shelter residents, hotels and encampments.
- Followed them over time for 12 months.
- Obtained saliva and finger prick blood test which allowed us to examine antibodies.
- Got their permission to link to health databases which allowed us to get

Research questions:

1. What is the prevalence and incidence of COVID – 19 among People experiencing homelessness (PEH) in Toronto over a 12 month period/
2. Are housing history, individual and shelter level characteristics associated with incidents of COVID infection among PEH/
3. Are housing individual and shelter level characteristics associated with worse health outcomes among PEH diagnosed with CPVID – 19?
4. Can we build an accurate and iteratively updated transmission model of COVID in the homeless population with data from this cohort study?

Recruitment – from across the city. Participants reflected the general general age, and race of the population

Findings.

- 30% of participants had a history COVID infection at baseline
- 16% participants had their first infection by 6 months. Most after Omicron became dominant.
- Most did not have a positive PCR test result.

Early learning about vaccination

- By the end of the study 90% had 1+vaccine does
- 88.3 had 2+ doses
- 69.3% had 3+ doses
- 28.1% had 4+ doses

This is reflective of the excellent outreach done by public health.

Factors

- Females more likely to be vaccinated.
- Higher rate of non vaccination amongst black participants. Reflects a finding within the general population.
- 65% of homelessness had at least 1 infection and 25% had 2 or more infections. This is comparable to gen population.

Qualitative

- High value placed on agency or control over their bodies.

- Trust in science but not in government.

Key Qualitative strategies for success.

- Get information from a trusted source, - peer, family doctor etc.
- Information outreach should be done prior to vaccination outreach
- Have lay people administer vaccines.
- Provide financial incentives to get a vaccine.
- Holistic approach should be taken beyond just the vaccine including access to healthy food and shelter etc.

Emerging learning and key messages.

- Infection burden among people PEH in Toronto is very high.
- Vaccination rates are also very high, higher than reported in other settings.
- Targeted campaign efforts were effective but need to target certain groups better.
- Congregate and crowded housing increase infection risks. Shelter hotels decreased risks for PEH in Toronto.

Q - what do you consider vaccination – is it two doses or is it boosters?

What about masking in shelters?

A - We looked at number of doses – 2 or 3 – not really about boosters.

We did not ask about the type of masking.

There are good fit tested mask adjacent masks that do not require fit testing and provide better protection than unfit tested cloth or surgical masks, which we have used with clients and staff in non-outbreak situations with great effect. :)

Q - is there a going to be an ongoing study as we hear about the next wave?

A – not right now. But we would like to.

Q Mobile homeless populations - reduce mobility to make it more sustainable for people to be in one service location and move around that spreads infection.

Until Omicron hit we had no cases because we had a transitional program – we had a good way of giving education to help them avoid spreading infection.

A – we were not able to look at mobility and housing. It was a virus that spread rapidly within a given site.

Q – anything on youth that was specific?

A – the study was not designed to specifically look at youth.

A – we are preparing a summary report about the study that will be available on our website.

Will share the slide deck with TAEH with everyone.

Just want to let everyone know about an upcoming public lecture: Unity Health Toronto's Annual Odette Family Lecture
 Thursday November 2, 2023 at 5:00 pm, 209 Victoria St.
 Keynote Speaker: Dr. Suzanne Stewart
 "Homelessness for Indigenous Peoples: Understanding spirit and context"

TAEH Items and Updates

- Someone Lives Here Screening
- Integration of the Supportive Housing Growth Plan
- Introducing the Housing Solutions Manager (Peter Martin)

More updates next meeting

Next Meeting:
Wednesday October 11, 2023
10:00am – Noon