

## ED Update April 2020

### Collaborative Pandemic Response:

- Our team is working collaboratively with networks across the City to respond to the pandemic.
  - The Coalition of CHRCs meets weekly to discuss gaps in service and how to address them. The United Way, City, and CFO are working together with the Coalition of CHRCs to coordinate requests for funding.
  - The CHC ED directors have been meeting regularly and are looking at building a shared online mental health supports resource through the OHT Mental Health and Addictions action team. We are also connected to the regional pandemic planning and response committee.
  - We are working with the City's Human Needs Task force to advocate for support for the most vulnerable residents. We also have representation at two of this group's subcommittees: Food Security & Mental Health & Isolation.
  - We are also working collaborative with other local Consumption and Treatment Services.
  - We are working with OLIP to lead a newcomer focused approach to COVID-19. Naini will be chairing the health and wellbeing table to identify issues and needs in the immigrant, refugee, and racialized communities.
  - Our Lung health manager is being invited to a sector table to look at the operational response to the pandemic.

### Advocacy:

- As a result of discussions that Somerset West and a group of partners have been having with the Alliance to End Homelessness, a letter has been released urging the City to purchase hotels to house the homeless. We need hotels to reduce pressure on emergency shelters and other essential social services, and give people who are homeless the proper tools they need to protect themselves from coronavirus. You can read the full letter here: <https://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/new-page-1>
- We encourage you to take action by supporting this letter on our social media, and by following some of the actions outlined here: <https://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/advocate-during-covid19-for-people-who-are-homeless>
- CBC reached out to us about the impact of COVID-19. Emilie Hayes, Manager of Community Engagement, spoke on CBC's all in a day about the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations and how directives of physical distancing are much easier to follow when you have a home, a car, and the means to stock up on supplies. She did an amazing job of highlighting what people are experiencing and how their choices are limited by having low income or by being homeless or precariously housed. The recording is [here](#).

- With the closure of City facilities, we know that vulnerable clients are struggling to find access washrooms. We are working with the City to identify priority areas where vulnerable people need access to washrooms.

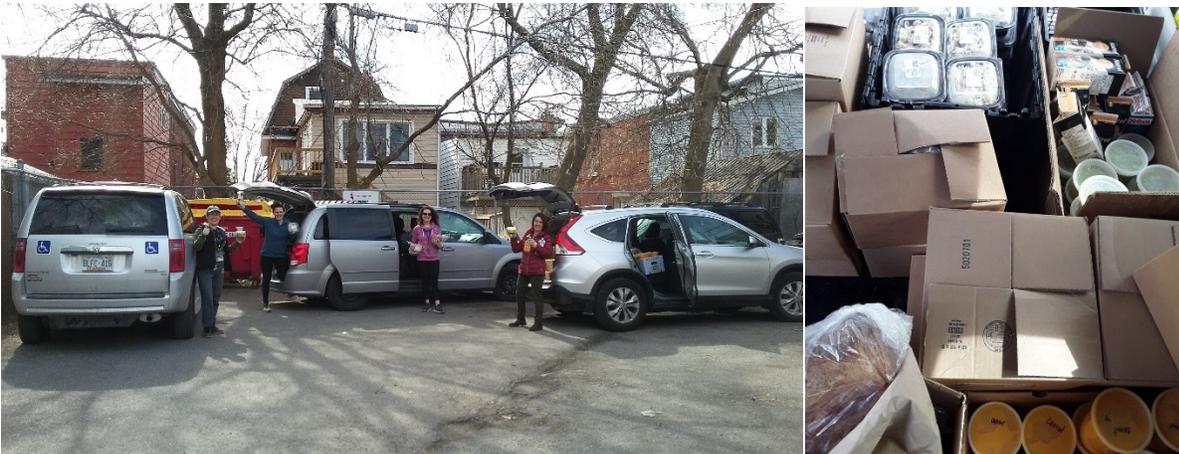
### **Adapting services:**

- We have been working closely with Health Canada to determine the best way to deliver our Consumption and Treatment Service in the face of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of these conversations we have been granted a temporary exemption by Health Canada, endorsed by the Ministry of Health, which will allow us to use the courtyard as a consumption space for the duration of the pandemic. The courtyard offers a number of unique advantages including:
  - The opportunity for broadly spaced consumption stations to allow for social distancing and to increase our capacity so wait times are not as long
  - Minimal infrastructure means less surface area to touch and enhanced Infection Prevention & Control ability
  - Open-air spaces decrease risk of virus transmission due to enhanced air flow
- In order to maintain safe social distancing, we have shifted all primary care health services to Rosemount. Harm reduction and mental health and counselling remains at Eccles. Active screening continues at both locations.
- We have introduced virtual care for our primary care and mental health services. We have crafted a policy for acquiring and recording consent, and manage risk when using platforms that are low-barrier but less secure (e.g. Zoom).
- Our mental health services are ramping up to support with increased anxiety and mental distress in the community.
  - Our social services walk-in is now providing telephone-based support from 9 – 4 pm Monday to Friday.
  - Staff are continuing to provide in person appointments for those who do not have a reliable phone. Walk-in appointments are available Monday to Friday, 1 – 4 pm, at 55 Eccles
  - Practical Support for Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Chinese Communities continues to be available by phone.
  - Single session counselling by phone is available in English and Mandarin.
- We are coordinating internally and externally to meet the needs of the community. We are focused on addressing food security, isolated and vulnerable community members, newcomers, rooming houses, and clients that are homeless. Activities include:
  - Food delivery for vulnerable and isolated individuals
  - Supporting food banks with deliveries
  - Preparing food for homeless clients
  - Helping those that can afford food but can not access it because of vulnerability to navigate resources
  - Phone check-ins for isolated clients

- Respiratory Therapists from our Lung health Program have been redeployed to the Brewer Arena Assessment Centre.
- Our Yet Keen team is conducting outreach by phone, sending out birthday greetings, and providing support with food distribution at Dalhousie Food Cupboard. Our team is also exploring options for virtual programming. Yet Keen staff have all been trained on the Good Companions technology for remote programming and a Mandarin and Cantonese program is currently being developed.
- Rochester Heights After School program has started engaging with clients in the program online and had 10 kids join them for their first group video chat. They were all really excited to reconnect.

### Community Impact:

- Internally, we provide daily staff updates about COVID-19, service changes, community resources, and good news stories.
- Staff from across programs have been working collaboratively to get food to isolated and vulnerable community members. With support from Parkdale Food Centre, Operation Ramzieh, Bread by Us, Red Apron, and Wellington Gastropub, we have been making regular deliveries of pantry staples and prepared meals to isolated seniors and rooming house residents.



- We are so lucky to be surrounded by thoughtful neighbours that left messages of hope and support at our Rosemount and Eccles location. (FYI: our tweet about the messages at Eccles received over 11,000 impressions on twitter alone)

