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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 2/5/2023 7:49:30 AM
Subject: Joint Mental Health Announcement (Feb. 5, 2023)
Attachments: CoV Urgent Mental Health Service Enhancements Framework_Backgrounder.pdf

Good morning Mayor & Council,

As follow up to my message from yesterday, later today the City will issue the below news release in support of a joint announcement with the Provincial government related to support for mental health services. I also have attached the VCH backgrounder that outlines technical details, as referenced in my earlier email. Please use the VCH backgrounder for purposes of any public comment in advance of the Council report being published next week.

Please keep the news release and backgrounder embargoed until they are sent from the City media email account approximately 1:30 PM today. If you have any questions or require additional information at this time, please let me know.

Best,

Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)

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EMBARGOED UNTIL 1:30 PM FEB 5, 2023

**City of Vancouver
News release**

February 5, 2023

**Council receives proposal to expand collaborative partnerships
on mental health and public safety in Vancouver**

\$2.8 million to support hiring of mental health workers in partnership with VCH

Recommendations for a \$2.8 million dollar grant to Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) from the City of Vancouver will be presented to Council on February 14 to enhance urgent mental health services.

Funding for the investment was enabled by the Council motion entitled [Enabling the Requisitioning and Hiring of 100 New Police Officers and 100 Mental Health Nurses \(Member's Motion B.5\)](#). Passed on Nov. 22, 2022 as part of various recommendations, the motion directed City staff to allocate \$8 million toward the hiring of new police officers and up to \$8 million toward VCH mental health crisis response services.

The recommended grant funding will enable service partners to:

- Increase the capacity of the Car 87/88 police-partnership service
- Grow the capacity of the Assertive Outreach Team police-partnership service
- Establish moderate (non-police) de-escalation services for individuals who are not in high levels of crisis and do not need Car 87/88 supports
- Strengthen Indigenous approaches across all VCH Urgent Mental Health services

The initial funding for 2023 will support preliminary work to begin hiring 58 positions. In future years, the City's annual grant to VCH will grow to \$8 million and may be used for more proactive and preventative services over time.

This investment, along with the funding allocation to hire 100 new police officers, are important components of an integrated approach that will serve to bolster Vancouver's frontline mental health and public safety response. It is the latest step forward to enhance the collaborative partnerships on public safety and mental health between the City of Vancouver, the Provincial government, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Vancouver Police Department.

Future phases of work with VCH may include proactive responses such as mental health outreach, integrated case management and services to support the integration of people recovering from crisis into community.

"Solving the problems that we see on our streets will require all of us working together," said **Premier David Eby**. "I want to thank Mayor Ken Sim and the City of Vancouver for showing leadership on these complex, public safety challenges. An enhanced Car 87/88 program will make a real difference here in Vancouver, and it serves as a model we can look at expanding to other communities."

"Investing in mental health supports in our communities is needed now more than ever," said **Adrian Dix, Minister of Health**. "Not only will those who are vulnerable benefit from receiving the care they deserve when they need it, the community-at-large will also benefit from having a stronger health-care system that works for everyone."

"When people are in crisis because of mental health or substance use challenges, they need to be met with care and compassion," said **Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and**

Addictions. “This partnership will help strengthen the work already underway by the Province to provide urgent supports for people. It is part of our continued commitment to ensure everyone gets the mental health and substance use supports they need, when and where they need them.”

“It’s hard to emphasize the importance of this announcement and the positive impact that it will have on our community. We are building on the foundation of a made-in-Vancouver approach that has been successful since 1978,” said **Mayor Ken Sim**. “With this announcement, we have the opportunity to set a new standard in North America for a modern and compassionate approach towards addressing the complex and often interlinked challenges regarding public safety and mental health.”

“Skilled outreach teams are critically important to support people in mental health crisis in our communities,” said **Dr. Patricia Daly, Vice President, Public Health and Chief Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health**. “With the support of partners at the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Police Department, we will be able to provide an enhanced suite of urgent mental health services that deliver safe, integrated care to those who need it most.”

“This is a positive step that will enhance public safety by supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our community,” said **VPD Chief Constable Adam Palmer**. “It is also an example of the positive change that occurs when we all work together to tackle complex problems.”

VCH will provide reports to Council on results and use of funding prior to receiving further installments, in addition to external reviews.

The full City of Vancouver report and the Urgent Mental Health Service Enhancements Framework will be available on the City of Vancouver website early next week.

LEARN MORE

[Vancouver Coastal Health Urgent Mental Health Service Enhancements Framework Backgrounder](#)

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Media contact:

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February 5, 2023

In response to a City of Vancouver (CoV) council motion, *Enabling the Requisitioning and Hiring of 100 New Police Officers and 100 Mental Health Nurses* (November 22, 2022), Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), in partnership with Vancouver Police Department and CoV staff, has proposed an *Urgent Mental Health Service Enhancements Framework* to enhance delivery of local mental health services.

Urgent Mental Health Service Enhancements Framework

For the first year of the initiative, VCH has prioritized responsive services from the Framework to address the most acute needs of the population and city.

Increasing capacity of police-partnership services

Expansion of the Car 87/88 program and of the Assertive Outreach Team (AOT).

Car 87/88 is a long-standing program that sends a clinician and a police officer to mental health crisis calls where there is a risk of harm while additional nurses are in an office doing other supportive work such as collecting information from police and health records. The partnership allows the system to provide a health response, rather than a criminal justice response during a mental health crisis, even when the individual is at risk of causing harm to themselves or others.

AOT primarily serves as a transition, bridging, and stabilization team for adults identified in recent emergency department or police contacts that may be suffering from moderate to severe mental health and/or co-occurring substance use issues. Team members provide short-term care on an outreach basis until a client is connected to the appropriate community services.

Moderate (non-police) de-escalation

This program does not currently exist and would use CoV resources to add the following mandate to an existing team. In certain instances where a person's mental health presentation is deteriorating, this service would:

- Work in partnership alongside shelter, housing providers, park rangers, store owners, service providers etc., to engage the individual needing support with a trauma-informed and relationship-based approach;
- Be comprised of nurses, social workers, cultural support workers, peers and community liaison workers and support from a psychiatrist;
- Work to help mitigate the behaviour/mental health presentation by connecting the individual to, or re-engaging them with a number of service options;
- Incorporate specific training in de-escalation and how to engage people who are using stimulants, or other substances, with risk mitigation strategies; and,
- Create a clear way for people to access this service and understand the support it can provide.

Strengthen Indigenous approaches across all VCH Urgent Mental Health services

The VCH Indigenous Health team will leverage its existing leadership team, Elders in Residence program, Indigenous nurse educators, Indigenous patient navigators and Indigenous cultural practitioners to develop a comprehensive and seamless referral network to culturally-specific programs and services. The approach will focus on navigation, mentorship and advocacy on behalf of the clients, and timely access to culturally appropriate and informed care. VCH will work with our extensive network of partners to help clients access primary care and land-based healing opportunities. We will continue to involve Local Host Nations and Elders will continue to be involved in all planning and service provision.

In the second phase (2024+), additional upstream resources will be added to support those at high risk of crisis, including:

- High priority mental health outreach;
- Intensive case management teams; and,
- Community integration.

Additional details regarding the Framework are outlined in VCH's formal proposal to the CoV.

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