



June 1, 2023

To our neighbours across the Sandy Hill community

Our team at the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre (SHCHC) would like to thank you for your frank open feedback about very real concerns about your experience as a neighbour – housed and unhoused, residents and business owners in the area. We are also grateful for your efforts in helping bring forward potential solutions to help address our shared concerns in collaborative and inclusive manners. These difficult conversations are the start of where change can occur.

Between February and April, community members from across Sandy Hill participated in a series of facilitated community conversations that helped us hear your concerns and ideas about how to keep our streets safe, our sidewalks clean, and our people healthy. We also heard that we need to do better - as a health service agency and as a community partner.

As a result of these candid conversations, we would like to outline the following commitments to the community.

In the short-term, we are collaborating with members of Action Sandy Hill (ASH) Community Association and the City of Ottawa to convene a working group made up of stakeholders who can contribute ideas, resources, and help expand our collaborative network with a solutions-driven approach. We are confident this working group can help shape how the local gaps and needs can be addressed and spearhead the work towards all other objectives that may follow.

Through this group, we will monitor the success of our collective efforts, as well as any potential gaps that remain. Our hope is that the working group will leverage data, partnerships, and innovative thinking to help put in place solutions to address these gaps.

SHCHC has identified and implemented measures within current operations to immediately expand respite services in Sandy Hill for those who are displaced. SHCHC drop-in services are now open Mondays to Fridays, 1 PM – 6 PM, at the Centre, to cover the period of highest demand. This timing has been coordinated to compliment other drop-in services who offer respite spaces in the morning.

SHCHC has been able to reallocate resources and we are in the process of expanding outreach services in the surrounding areas to the Centre. That means that this daily service, operating between 8 AM and 6 PM, will be implemented shortly to include engagement of all community members in the area, respond to localized concerns in relation to those directly or indirectly impacted by harm reduction practices, overdose response and community clean up.

We continue to ramp up to pre-pandemic service hours for the Consumption and Treatment Services. In June, this service will be made available on Saturdays and Sundays, from 8 AM to 6 PM. We are confident that this will encourage people to access services within our space as an alternative to street use. We will monitor the impact for service users and neighbours before moving to our eventual model to operate the service as designed, 7-days-a-week from 8 AM to 8 PM.

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SHCHC is committed to supporting the working group through full engagement and practical resource supports the group desires (including meeting space / virtual meeting platform, clerical support, partner, and funder relationships, etc.).

We will continue to play a leadership role in bringing the service provider community, funders and elected officials together to address operational gaps.

In the medium to long-term, we will work hand-in-hand with the working group, partners and funders to continue to adapt our services to the changing landscape and needs. We will continue to advocate for adequate funding to meet health and social needs, including affordable housing, equitable access to health and social services, and harm reduction. We will monitor new funding, as well as opportunities to address current and emerging issues. We will continue to work with service providers and community partners to plan for safer inhalation services in Ottawa.

We commit to keeping the conversation going, to listen deeply to stakeholders, to expand and create new ways to keep our community safe and healthy for everyone, by finding solutions to our collective concerns. We are all connected by this shared experience and are deeply appreciative of this community's drive to create a responsive, vibrant, and connected community for all.

Should you have any questions, comments, or feedback for our team, we can be reached at info@sandyhillchc.on.ca or (613) 789-1500.

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Gibson', written in a cursive style.

David Gibson
Executive Director
Sandy Hill Community Health Centre