

Copy of letter sent to the:

Honourable M. Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, Honourable P. Calandra  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Honourable S. Jones Minister of Health

Many caregivers of loved ones living with a mental illness or substance use disorder are consumed by what will happen to their loved ones “when they are gone”. Reports about unhoused and unsheltered people heighten this concern, particularly for caregivers who are the only source of support for their loved one.

We are writing today to invite you and your colleagues to join caregivers of those living with a mental illness and/or substance use disorder in planning for a safe place to live for their loved ones when they are gone. Our initial vision includes a sustainable housing plan, community supports, personal supports and estate and financial planning assistance.

As the current mental illness caregiver community ages, most would agree that it is becoming increasingly more urgent to plan for “when they are gone” In many cases, the caregiver is the only source of supports and without a plan going forward our most vulnerable are at risk of increased: 911 calls, visits to ER, hospitalizations, substance abuse, isolation and loneliness, food insecurity, homelessness, contact with the law, arrest, and incarceration.

The challenges are significant: affordable housing is extremely hard to come by, it is hard to maintain for people living on the margins, there are few new listings, the average rental is too expensive, demand outstrips supply because there are many unhoused and untreated people, waiting lists are interminable, and funding is inadequate.

In response, we propose a caregiver-focused approach including a third-party resource that supports caregivers seeking to address the housing needs of those they care for – an approach that includes planning providing for a transition to community supports now and on-going supports when the caregiver is gone as presented at Annex ‘A’

More specifically, we propose establishing a third-party resource with a mandate to support caregivers in the development of a housing plan now and its implementation when the caregiver is gone including as presented at Annex ‘B’ these features:

- Housing no matter where they are along the path to recovery – treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery
- Transition to community supports and independent living today while responding to the varying levels of support required along the way including links to planning for long term housing needs
- Relationships building among all concerned based on trust, accountability, and well-defined boundaries
- A tiered approach to planning that responds to the needs unique to each caregiver and includes contingency plans in place in response to any change in the required mental health and/or physical health supports

In closing, we would welcome the participation of representatives from your ministry to support our current and future efforts and action plan. Our initial thoughts on how you might help us with this initiative include, but are not limited to:

- The Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Children, Community and Social Services in strategies to fund third-party support for caregivers planning for the housing needs of their loved ones now and when they are gone
- The Minister of Health in strategies to fund the personal supports so critical to ensuring the implementation of a housing plan that is sustainable and continues to address the mental and physical health well-being of our most vulnerable in our community

**ANNEX 'A' - CAREGIVERS PLANNING FOR WHEN THEY ARE GONE – A CAREGIVER FOCUSED APPROACH**

<b>Acute Phase – Treatment and Rehabilitation</b>		<b>Chronic Phase – Recovery</b>	
<b>Community supports – intensive case management with caregiver support</b>		<b>On-going Community Supports – low to intensive case management with caregiver support</b>	<b>Community supports – low to intensive case management without caregiver support</b>
<b>THE CHALLENGE</b>	<b>AWARENESS, EDUCATION, AND PLANNING</b>	<b>TRANSITION TO ON-GOING COMMUNITY SUPPORTS</b>	<b>ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SUPPORTS</b>
<p><i>Developing a housing plan while addressing the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Caregivers planning for the housing needs of those they care for no matter where they are along the path to recovery – treatment, rehabilitation, and recovery</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The transition to community supports and independent living today while responding to the varying levels of support required along the way including links to planning for when the caregiver is gone</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <i>Building relationships among all concerned based on trust, accountability, and well-defined boundaries</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Taking a tiered approach to planning that responds to the needs unique to each caregiver and includes contingency planning in response to any change in both the family member's housing needs and the required mental health and/or physical health supports</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<p><i>A third-party resource positioned to:</i></p> <p><i>Support both the development of a housing plan and its implementation when the caregiver is gone or no longer able to provide the required supports</i></p> <p align="center"><i>A Tiered Approach</i></p> <p><i>Tier One – a plan for a family member that has continued access to family-owned home with the resources available to provide for legal, financial and property management services</i></p> <p><i>Tier Two – a plan for a family member that no longer has access to housing or other supports provided by caregiver and will need to plan for alternative arrangements</i></p> <p><i>Tier Three – a contingency plan for a family member that has continued access to family-owned home but because of changes in mental and/or physical health needs to plan for alternative arrangements such as the sale of the family-owned home and transition to supported housing</i></p>	<p><i>An organization positioned to:</i></p> <p><i>Provide personal supports and if required, supported housing to persons living with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorder</i></p> <p align="center"><i>A Tiered Approach</i></p> <p><i>Tier One – access to personal supports and services including wellness checks, social and community connections, leisure and recreation programs, psychoeducation, system navigation</i></p> <p><i>Tier Two – access to both tier 1 personal supports as highlighted above as well as supported housing</i></p> <p><i>Tier Three – access to and implementation of the contingency plan in place for the family member in response to any change in both the housing needs and the required mental health and/or physical health supports</i></p>

**ANNEX 'B' - CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION**

**A Third-party resource with a mandate to support caregivers caring for persons living with mental illness and or substance use disorder planning for - now and when they are gone**

**A mandate that provides those they care for continuing access to safe and secure housing and on-going personal supports as follows:**

	<b>PERSONAL SUPPORTS</b>	<b>ESTATE, FINANCIAL PLANNING PROPERTY MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>ENSURING CONTINUED ACCESS TO SERVICES AND PROGRAMS – CREATION OF A PORTFOLIO OF SERVICES</b>	Access to a portfolio of services, programs and planning tools offered by the mental health service provider community with a focus on offering caregivers the opportunity to choose from a range of possibilities related to providing for personal supports including links to housing solutions – now and when they are gone	Access to a portfolio of services and planning tools offered by a network of qualified subject matter experts related to estate and financial planning as well as a network of qualified real estate firms, property managers and home improvement service providers – now and when they are gone
<b>SHARED AND COLLECTIVE EXPERTISE</b>	<p>Supporting efforts among selected partners directed at identifying evidence based best practices in support of both persons living with a mental illness and/or substance use disorders with a focus on what is common and what is unique to their respective communities.</p> <p>It may include but not be limited to making the right choices, coaching, relationship building based on trust and respect for and among all concerned, ongoing conflict resolution and overcoming situational difficulties.</p>	Working with subject matter experts in organizing educational sessions, focus groups, workshops as well as providing for on-line resources for caregivers planning for now and when they are gone

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	<b>PERSONAL SUPPORTS</b>	<b>ESTATE, FINANCIAL PLANNING AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>CRISIS MANAGEMENT – ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF 'FIRST RESPONSE'</b>	Access to crisis and intensive case management and if required, system navigation including monitoring, follow-up and reporting on steps taken to support the caregiver and the person living with mental illness and/or substance use disorder – now and when they are gone	Access to estate and financial planning services as well as real estate and property management services in the event of unforeseen – now and when they are gone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legal and financial concerns; and</li> <li>▪ Property management concerns from general repairs to change in housing situation such as the sale of property and relocation to supported living that need to be addressed to avoid undue hardship</li> </ul>
<b>PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION</b>	Supporting efforts focused on collaboration such as sharing information, lessons learned and seeking opportunities to provide mutual support.  Working with other organizations in a collaborative approach to supporting caregivers and those they care will result in tremendous benefits to individuals and families alike.	Supporting efforts focused on collaboration with estate, financial planning as well as real estate and property management communities in addressing the concerns of caregivers seeking support for a broad range of housing solutions and continued access to personal supports for those they care for – now and when they are gone – such as sharing information, lessons learned and seeking opportunities for improvement
<b>AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING AND EMPOWERMENT</b>	Bringing together caregivers from the mental illness and/or substance use disorder caregiver community focused on ensuring all concerned understand and are aware of their needs and challenges associated with ensuring those they care for have continuing access to personal supports and safe and secure housing – now and when they are gone	