



April 17, 2020

CEO Report:

EHW's Process for Developing a Winnipeg High-level COVID Response Plan

On March 13 EHW held a meeting of key stakeholders from over twenty organizations including three City of Winnipeg departments and the WRHA to begin preparing a high-level COVID-19 response plan.

This Initial Response Group immediately recognized the need to establish working groups to focus on five critical service areas:

- Community sites and food security
- Harm reduction
- Youth /safe spaces / Housing First
- Shelters
- Outreach / unsheltered

The working groups were established immediately and included people with expert knowledge from community organizations, the City of Winnipeg, the WRHA, and the Government of Manitoba. As shown in the table on page 3, over forty organizations/programs have participated on one or more groups. EHW has also shared information with many others, engaged with Indigenous governments, and is having frequent discussions with senior officials at the City, province, federal government, WRHA, and United Way Winnipeg.

The working groups quickly identified the services and additional resources required to provide a coordinated response to the pandemic and they continue to meet regularly – some several times each week – to discuss challenges, potential solutions, and the need for information and protocols to effectively and safely handle specific issues to support and protect both the people experiencing homelessness and those who work with them.

The working groups developed budgets that totalled \$12.5 million, far exceeding the \$6M that EHW hoped to receive from the Government of Canada for the COVID response. Accordingly, staff carefully considered each budget line and reduced the total to \$6M based on the following criteria:

- The Reaching Home directives for the COVID response funding
- Working groups' assessment of the priority level
- Whether the budget item addresses a basic need such as shelter and food or a health and safety need including mental health and harm reduction
- Whether organizations have access to other funding
- Whether the need can be met by in-kind community resources

On March 30, EHW learned that the federal government would provide \$2.9 million to support the COVID-19 response plan. Once again staff reviewed each budget line and reduced the total by half – to \$2.9 million or one quarter of the original budget submitted by the working groups. The revised budget has been shared with working groups and changes have been made to reflect their feedback, additional information provided by individual organizations, and commitments made by other funders. Throughout the process staff has been guided by EHW's core values.

By April 9, EHW had issued MOUs that provide \$200 thousand in immediate funding to seven organizations for urgent priorities: testing, isolation, emergency shelter, and meals. We are now

preparing MOUs that will flow more funding to sixteen community-based organizations. These MOUs will increase funding for emergency shelter, isolation, food programs and other critical services such as outreach, transportation, harm reduction, and safety supplies including personal protective equipment (PPEs).

Staff has talked with federal officials about the need for additional COVID response funding to address the particularly complex needs of Winnipeg's homeless population. Officials understand the issue and are continuing to engage EHW in one-to-one discussions and in calls with other community entities from across Canada. In addition federal officials are looking for ways to provide more funding to support Winnipeg's homeless population during the pandemic and have invited EHW to pilot a new application for additional Reaching Home COVID-19 funding. We are now preparing the application.

When the Community Advisory Board meets on April 16 it will have an opportunity to review the High Level COVID Response Plan and develop a recommendation on funding. CAB's recommendation will go to EHW's Board of Directors for consideration and approval at a special meeting on April 20.

In responding to COVID-19, members of the homeless-serving sector have demonstrated a willingness and ability to work collectively to achieve a common goal. This collaborative effort provides a strong foundation for developing a coordinated access system as required under the Government of Canada's Reaching Home directives.

Organizations Participating in the COVID-19 Initial Response and Working Groups

	Organization	Initial Response Group	Community Sites	Harm Reduction	Youth / Safe Spaces / Housing First	Shelters	Outreach / Unsheltered
1	1JustCity – Just a Warm Sleep					*	
2	Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre	*	*		*		
3	Central Neighborhoods	*					
4	City of Winnipeg		*				
5	City of Winnipeg Community Services	*				*	
6	City of Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service	*				*	*
7	City of Winnipeg Office of Emergency Management	*					
8	Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)				*		
9	Downtown Winnipeg BIZ – CHAT	*					*
10	Eagle Urban Transition Centre	*					
11	Health Sciences Centre- social work	*					
12	Klinik		*				
13	Lighthouse Mission		*				
14	Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.		*		*		*
15	Macdonald Youth Services	*			*		
16	Main Street Project	*	*	*		*	*
17	Manitoba Assoc. of Community Health					*	
18	Manitoba Harm Reduction Network			*			
19	Manitoba Housing					*	
20	Manitoba Métis Federation		*				
21	Mount Carmel Clinic	*	*		*		
22	Mount Carmel Clinic Sage House						*
23	Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc.	*			*		*
24	Nine Circles	*		*			
25	North Point Douglas Women's Centre		*				
26	Northend Women's Centre		*				
27	RaY (Resource Assistance for Youth)	*		*			*
28	Rossbrook House				*		
29	Salvation Army Booth Centre	*				*	
30	Siloam Mission	*				*	
31	Spence Neighbourhood Association (WE 24)	*			*		*
32	Scope		*			*	
33	St. Boniface St. Links/Morberg House	*					*
34	Street Connections						*
35	United Way Winnipeg	*					
36	Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)	*	*			*	
37	WRHA: Health Outreach and Community Support (HOCS)						*
38	WRHA: Public Health			*			
39	Wahbung Abinoonjiag Inc.		*				*
40	West Broadway Community Organization		*				
41	West Central Women's Resource Centre	*	*		*		*
42	Winnipeg Harvest	*	*				
43	Winnipeg Outreach Network	*					
44	Women's Health Clinic (MACH)		*				

In addition to the organizations and programs listed above, many others provided information to EHW and received updates about EHW's COVID response.