

The Corporation of the City of Cambridge

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
AND COUNCIL

Delivered by hand and electronic mail.

August 15, 2024

Dear Mayors, CAOs, Provincial, and Federal Party Leaders,

Re: Mental Health and Addictions Crisis

I do not think it is an overstatement: the current mental health and addictions crisis is the greatest calamity of our time. This crisis has leached into the very fabric of our lives – it has turned our streets into the theatre of mental crises and places for open drug use, it has affected economic development on a micro and macro scale, and most importantly, the negative impact to the health and wellness of our community members of all ages will be felt for generations.

For about three decades, we have debated and engaged in discourse on this topic with very little to show for it. The situation has never been worse. Actions taken to this point have only exacerbated the crisis. Daily, my office is inundated with calls and emails regarding the lack of mental health and addiction services in our community.

When I became mayor, one of the goals I set out to accomplish was to make a difference where it counted, to change the ever-increasing numbers of people in the throes of addiction and mental health crises; or at the very least stabilize the numbers. We have been spinning in circles, not achieving anything while we continue to talk at people. I felt I knew what needed to be done but I wanted to hear from the people who live with this every day. As the leader of my community, I realized I needed to take it to the people and then listen carefully, so I decided to do a poll. I believe this poll captures what every government needs to know when allocating funds, which is how do we help in the best way possible. If we as leaders do this, we can change the catastrophic future of our current path

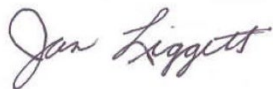
Last year, I was presented with the opportunity to begin work on an Ontario-wide study to determine how Ontarians feel about the current state of mental health and addictions

services. The study, conducted by Campaign Research, indicates that Ontarians want to see this crisis addressed. Ontarians overwhelmingly support the idea of a dedicated revenue stream to solve the problem and have expressed a desire for the provincial government to institute legislative changes to allow families and physicians to provide mental health and addiction treatment to involuntary patients. I attach herewith the condensed findings for your review.

I am comforted to see that across regional and political lines and market segments Ontarians want to see this crisis solved.

I encourage you to share the results of this study with your network. I am eager to discuss this matter further and work together towards a solution for this is happening on our collective watch. Please feel free to reach out to my Executive Assistant, Ana Djukic, by email at djukica@cambridge.ca, should you wish to obtain a full copy of the results or schedule a time for us to speak.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jan Liggett".

Jan Liggett
Mayor