



The Regional Municipality of York Police Services Board

To Make a Difference in Our Community

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May 14, 2019

The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Minister
Ministry of the Solicitor General
George Drew Building, 18th Floor
25 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON, M7A 1Y6

Dear Minister Jones:

Re: Police-Hospital Handover Protocol

At its meeting on February 27, 2019, the York Regional Police Services Board endorsed the resolution proposed by the London Police Services Board (“LPSB”) regarding Hospital Emergency Room Handover Protocol – a copy is attached.

Section 17 of the *Mental Health Act (MHA)* provides police with the authority, under certain circumstances, to take a person in custody to an appropriate place for examination by a physician in relation to mental health. Where a police officer takes a person in custody to a designated health facility for the purpose of a psychiatric assessment further to the *MHA*, a police officer must remain at the facility and retain custody of an individual until the facility has accepted custody of the individual.

In 2018, York Regional Police officers spent about 7,500 hours in the emergency rooms of local hospitals pursuant to the requirements under the *MHA*. Our Board supports LPSB’s assertions that not only does this practice take officers away from front-line duties and from answering calls for service, but it further stigmatizes the individual who is often required to wait in the emergency room with police officers.

Wait times for the transfer of custody of individuals apprehended under the *MHA* in York Region are currently approximately 69 minutes. However, wait times fluctuate and can be up to 110 minutes; in addition, at least two officers are required to be on stand-by in emergency departments.

Our Board has made significant investments in reducing wait times in the emergency room and in ensuring that the right support is available when the police are called in for assistance. York Regional Police have two Mental Health Support teams who work in conjunction with York Support Services Network to ensure better outcomes for individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

We also think it is important for the Province to develop a province-wide standard that supports positive outcomes for the community and for individuals who are apprehended under the *MHA*. We urge the Ministry to take steps to develop and implement a province-wide protocol with built-in accountability measures to help officers return to responding to their front-line duties and to help ensure a safer and more dignified process for people apprehended under the *Mental Health Act*.

Your consideration of this matter is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virginia Hackson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

Chair Virginia Hackson
Mayor, Town of East Gwillimbury

Attachment: Correspondence from London Police Services Board

Cc: Minister Christine Elliott, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Chief Eric Jolliffe, York Regional Police
Ontario Association of Police Services Boards
York Regional Council