

Responses to Jury Recommendations
 ABDI Inquest Q2024-46
 CITY OF OTTAWA/OTTAWA PUBLIC HEALTH

<p>RECOMMENDATION: #43-47</p>

REC. #	ORGANIZATION'S RESPONSE
<p>43. Consider how to coordinate efforts across all responding organizations (i.e. police, ANCHOR, paramedics, etc.) to maximize resources and efficiency in servicing individuals in mental health crisis.</p> <p><i>With Ottawa Public Health</i></p>	<p>Alternate Neighbourhood Crisis Response (ANCHOR) was launched on August 15 2024 in Centretown following approval from Ottawa City Council (ACS2023-CSS-GEN-010) in July 2023. City of Ottawa continues to coordinate efforts across all responding organizations. To Launch the ANCHOR prototype, the City formed an ANCHOR Executive Sponsors Committee including the General Managers of Community and Social and Protective Services, Ottawa Public Health's Medical Officer of Health, Chief of Ottawa Police Service, Chief of Paramedics. Established in 2023, this body ensured that community-led crisis response was coordinated and supported by different City services.</p> <p>ANCHOR developed a Crisis Call Triage Framework to guide the call flow, call diversion and dispatching processes and provide a framework to manage and coordinate crisis call intake between ANCHOR's CNEO/211 and 911/OPS. Furthermore, ANCHOR operations team (includes 911/OPS and paramedic) meets monthly to ensure coordination of the alternative response among all collaborators.</p> <p>In its effort to maximize resources and efficiency in servicing individuals in mental health crisis, the Community Safety Wellbeing Office established a cross-</p>

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	<p>department collaboration group on mental well-being to ensure that knowledge sharing and coordination when needed take place.</p> <p>The City also sits on multiple tables that address mental health and substance use downtown. This includes the Byward Market Balanced Task Force, Frontline Taskforce, Sandy Hill Liaison Committee, Downtown Integrated Situation Table, Downtown Integrated Situation Table Steering Committee, Unsheltered Taskforce, and the Outreach Coalition.</p> <p>Between 2024 to 2025, the Ottawa Health Team – Équipe Santé Ottawa led a project to map Ottawa Mobile Crisis Response Programs with participation from ANCHOR partners (Centretown CHC, Somerset West CHC, CNEO/211), the Ottawa Hospital, Youth Services Bureau, Ottawa Distress Centre and City of Ottawa. This project will produce a decision tree/map of Ottawa Mobile Crisis Response for mental health crisis and a toolkit to help providers and service users in system navigation. Utilizing these tools is expected to enable service providers work as a coordinated team and increase efficiency in service provision to people experiencing mental health crisis in Ottawa. The project will be completed in Quarter 4 of 2025.</p>
<p>44. Work in tandem with peer run organization(s) of people with lived experience community agencies and initiatives to promote and raise awareness of alternate responses and mental health resources and services and to reduce stigma. Peer run</p>	<p>City of Ottawa partnered with the Ottawa Guiding Council for Mental Health and Addictions who conducted extensive community engagement which led to the design of ANCHOR. The membership of the Guiding Council is made up of representation from the Ottawa-based community, including Ottawa Public Health, health and social service networks working to respond to mental health crises and public institutions that have mandated responsibilities to respond to mental health and substance use crises. The Guiding Council is co-chaired by Ottawa Black</p>

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<p>organization of people with lived experience would Co-Chair this initiative.</p> <p><i>With Ottawa Public Health</i></p>	<p>Mental Health Coalition. The Guiding Council established a People with Lived and Living Experience Working Group which provided input into the engagement and model development of ANCHOR.</p> <p>The City of Ottawa continues to work in tandem with peer run organization(s) of people with lived experience through their representation in advisory committees and a wide scope public engagement strategy which includes voices of persons with lived and living experience actively and meaningfully.</p> <p>In 2026, the City, through the Community Safety Wellbeing Office, will establish a community-led advisory group for its Mental Wellbeing priority that includes representation of peer-oriented organization(s) and of people with lived experience. The role of this group would be to ensure that lived and living experience is centered in the Mental Well-Being CSW priority.</p>
<p>45. Consult on ways, and provide funding, to evaluate and expand the availability of ANCHOR or similar community-based, peer led 24/7 crisis intervention programs to the entire City of Ottawa. Such programs should be developed with input from and collaboration with community-led bodies, particularly peer run organizations representing people with</p>	<p>Funded by Ministry of The Solicitor General, ANCHOR is currently running until March 2027. ANCHOR summative and final evaluations will take place in 2026 and 2027 to evaluate the pilot and build the case for City-wide expansion. As the programs near the end of the pilot phase, City of Ottawa will consult with community partners including CNEO/211, Centretown CHC and Somerset West CHC to develop an expansion plan to make ANCHOR available 24/7 city-wide.</p> <p>Prior to ANCHOR launch, the City developed evaluation and equity frameworks to ensure that robust monitoring and evaluation will take place on ANCHOR's qualitative and quantitative outcomes. A formative evaluation of the program for the first 11 weeks, from August 15 to October 31, 2024 was conducted. Findings</p>

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<p>lived experience with representation from local and impacted populations.</p> <p><i>With Ministry of Health and Ministry of The Solicitor General</i></p>	<p>from the formative evaluation were published in an infographic. Planning is underway for a 1-year evaluation.</p>
<p>46. Prioritize and assist with the development of a mental health response strategy based on the Guiding Council's ongoing consultations with Ottawa's Somali and African, Caribbean and Black communities, including the introduction of a community centre offering a safe space to gather, culturally appropriate counselling and other mental health services and resources.</p> <p><i>City of Ottawa Only</i></p>	<p>City of Ottawa collaborated with the Ottawa Guiding Council for Mental Health and Addictions in the development of Ottawa's Mental Health Strategy titled 'Transforming Mental Health and Substance Use Crisis Response in Ottawa: The Strategy 2023-2026'. This response strategy is aligned with the Mental Well-Being priority of Ottawa's Community and Safety Wellbeing Plan. This plan has specific recommendations for addressing the needs of the Somali, African, Caribbean and Black communities.</p> <p>City of Ottawa continues to fund and support ongoing work of the Guiding Council in 2025. Funding provided by the City supports work of the Guiding Council in active engagement of Ottawa's Somali community.</p>
<p>47. Prioritize and assist with the development of wrap around supports and community-based mental health peer supports in priority neighbourhoods with a goal of reducing or preventing incidents of crisis.</p> <p><i>City of Ottawa Only</i></p>	<p>Peer support and wrap-around system is a key component of ANCHOR with the goal of ensuring that service users receive on-going support to prevent incidents of crisis. ANCHOR's Post-Crisis work is done by Community Response Workers to connect clients to services to provide stability, system navigation and follow up support.</p> <p>ANCHOR works closely with the Integrated Neighbourhood Services Team (INST) which plays a critical role as a connector, not a direct responder, in supporting the mental health and well-being of residents in Priority Neighbourhoods. INST's</p>

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	<p>responsibility is to actively listen, observe, and elevate emerging concerns to the appropriate partners, such as Ottawa Police Services and Paramedics This ensures that timely, informed, and expert actions (whether through community education, service referrals, or the deployment of targeted mental health resources) can be taken by those with the mandate and clinical expertise to do so.</p> <p>City of Ottawa funds and works closely with community-based organisations to ensure that residents receive appropriate wrap around support across essential needs like housing, employment, food etc. The Community Funding Framework ensures that community funding is allocated to community organizations with mental health mandate. This includes project funding earmarked to this area. In 2025, Community Funding invested \$4.7M in 25 social service agencies for mental health services through the Sustainability Fund. Community Funding invested an additional \$14.4M of core operational funding to 13 Community Health and Resources Centres (CHRCs) who might offer some mental health services through their core operations.</p> <p>Starting Fall of 2023, Ottawa Public Health began expanding on its Youth Connections Ottawa (YCO) program beyond schools and into the community. This peer-to-peer program has been launched at several sites across the city, helping racialized, newcomer, and faith-based youth feel more connected and better informed about mental health supports and when to use them.</p> <p>OPH's community-based initiative <i>Our Community Our House-Working Together on Wellness</i>. This program supports neighborhoods by offering quarterly drop-ins and activities focused on mental health, addictions, and substance use at local community houses. It's co-designed with the community to serve all age groups</p>

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	and reach multi-generational households. The team members are dedicated to supporting all 16 Ottawa Community Houses and the 11 OPH Neighbourhood Health and Wellness Hubs .