Statement by Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness and the Toronto Shelter Network
Re: Ontario Government Decision to Defund Safe Consumption Sites

The Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) and the Toronto Shelter Network (TSN) strongly condemn the Ontario government's decision to defund safe consumption sites across the province, echoing the concerns of health care professionals and our partners across the housing and homelessness sectors.

In Toronto and in communities across Ontario and throughout Canada, people have been facing an unprecedented toxic drug crisis. This is a moment that demands public health attention and expanded, evidence-based supports, including harm reduction services. Safe consumption sites are proven harm-reduction measures that support people who use drugs and people living with addiction. Research shows that safe consumption services reduce drug-related deaths in their neighborhoods and are not associated with long-term increases in crime. The decision to close safe consumption sites will make it harder for people to access essential, life-saving health services. Closing safe consumption sites will not make drug use disappear, it will serve to push people into unsafe and unsupported spaces.

The Supreme Court of Canada has recognized that denying people access to health services provided through safe consumption sites threatens their health and their lives. Our city has already seen a devastating rise in overdose and overdose related death since the March 2025 forced closure of multiple safe consumption sites in Toronto. The government's decision to defund safe consumption sites will further reduce access to critical, lifesaving health care services. It will disproportionately harm already marginalized communities, including Indigenous and racialized people and those experiencing poverty and homelessness. It will put even more strain on homeless respites, shelters and drop-ins as well as our first responders, emergency departments, hospitals and the health care system.

The Ontario government introduced HART Hubs to treat clients with complex service needs by providing safety and support for substance use. Research has shown that safe consumption sites improve access to healthcare services, help to build relationships between healthcare providers and people who inject drugs and increase entry into substance use treatment programs — the declared goal of HART Hubs. The decision to defund safe consumption sites counters the very aims of the HART Hubs, disregards evidence and expert advice, was done without consultations with those directly involved in these services, will put vulnerable and marginalized people at greater risk, and cost lives.

The TAEH and TSN call on the Ontario government to reverse its decision to defund safe consumption sites, and come to the table to collaborate on evidence-based alternative models of care that will uphold the safety, health, and dignity of all people who use drugs and people living with addictions.

The Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness is a community-based collective impact initiative that recognizes the critical importance of working in a new way towards our common vision of a Toronto where homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring.

The Toronto Shelter Network represents Toronto's homelessness service providers. Together with our members and people with lived experience of homelessness, we shape how services are designed and delivered, and support emergency homelessness service providers across Toronto to more effectively meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.