

**Speaking notes: Councillor Paul Ainslie**

Good morning everyone. My name is Councillor Paul Ainslie. I would like to thank you for joining us here today for this important event.

Before we begin, I would like I would like to thank the Church of the Holy Trinity for opening their doors and sharing their space for our announcement before the monthly Homeless Memorial service they host to acknowledge the many lives lost due to homelessness in our city.

One of my great privileges as Councillor is to be able to raise awareness of the challenges we face across our city and to help bring them to the attention of those who can help address them most effectively. The plight of the homeless and marginally housed in our city is one that requires more work and attention and I am very encouraged to see so many of you here today who share in that belief.

Last March City Council adopted recommendations for the Board of Health to begin collecting all relevant data related to deaths of homeless individuals within and outside homeless shelters. The collection of this data is important. It is the tool needed for us to begin influencing decision making at all levels of government; to bring purposeful policies and legislation to help the homeless and sick who live on the streets of Toronto.

The collection of data is significant in affecting how governments could work cohesively to address the issues and provide the supports required to prevent the unfortunate circumstances of our homeless dying on Toronto streets.

I found it necessary that our City start collecting data on the number of individuals who perish outside the physical boundaries of the shelter system immediately, as without data without real statistics how were we to frame legislation and prepare preventative measures.

Toronto Public Health is well-equipped to lead this initiative as they are committed to protecting and promoting the health of all Toronto residents, including those who are often not represented fully in, and by, the system.

I'm very honoured that I can be here with you to share what I believe will be only one of many strides we'll continue to make in this area and I look forward to marking this progress with you in the months and years ahead.

Before I hand it over to our next speaker, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank Cathy Crowe for her long standing work with the homeless along with her selfless efforts as a nurse to those in need. I would also like to thank Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Acting Medical Health Officer and her team.

I would now like to invite and welcome Toronto's Acting Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Barbara Yaffe, up to say a few words.

**[End]**