

# How A 'Prescription' for Supportive Housing Can Reduce Hallway Medicine & Why Every Government and Community Should Care

10th Annual IMFG Toronto City Manager's Address  
Chris Murray  
November 23, 2021



“The highest 200-300 users of emergency room services — with over 75 thousand visits per year — consume 30% of resources.”

Dr. Kevin Smith, President & CEO  
University Health Network (UHN)



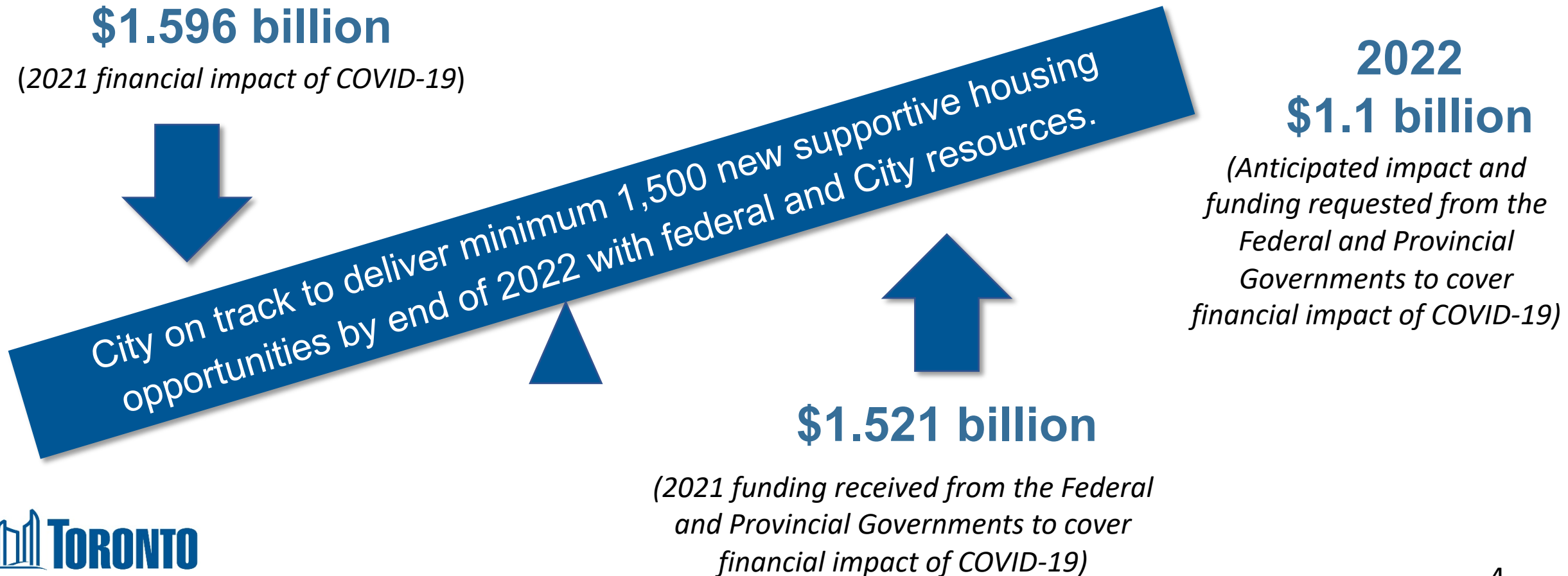


***“It is homes we must give our people, not merely shelter.”***

- Dr. Charles Hastings, Toronto Medical Officer of Health, 1918

# Financial Impact of COVID-19

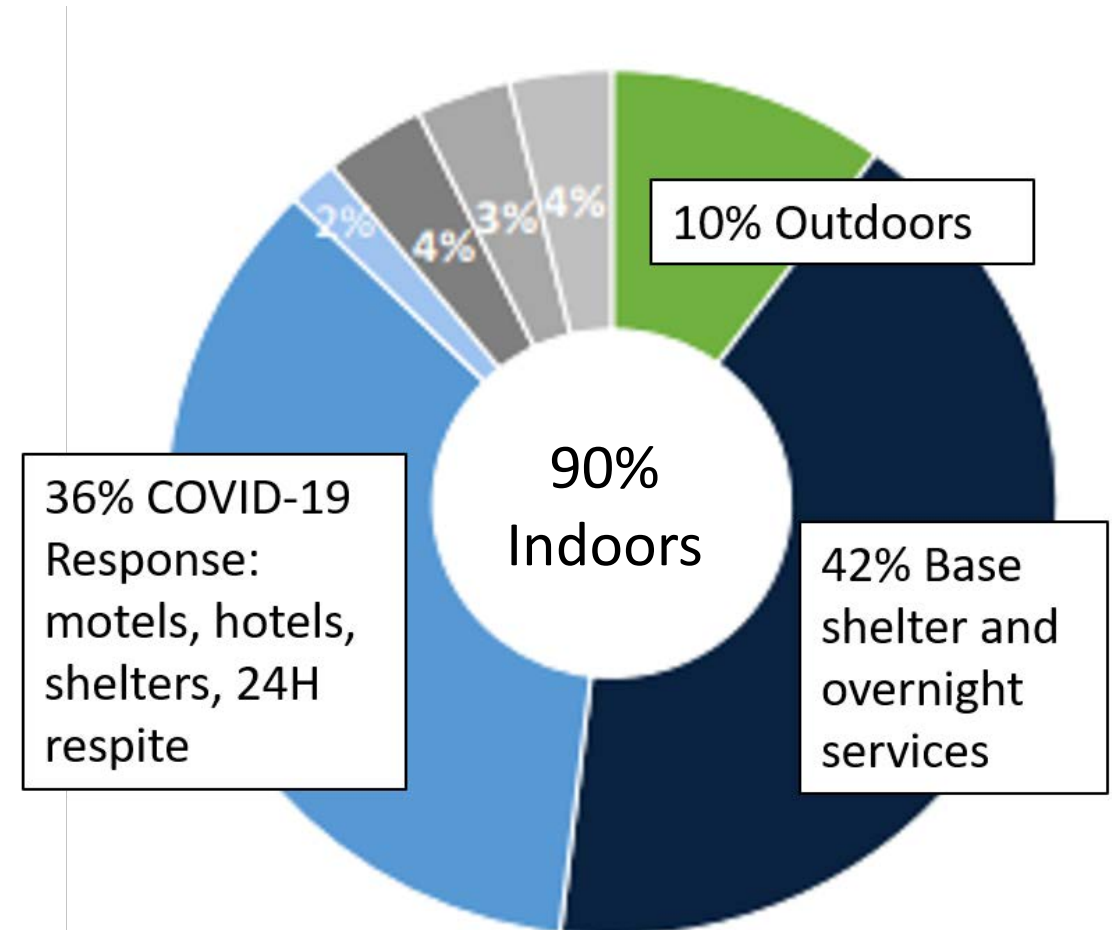
Operating temporary shelter spaces accounts for the City's **largest pandemic expense**



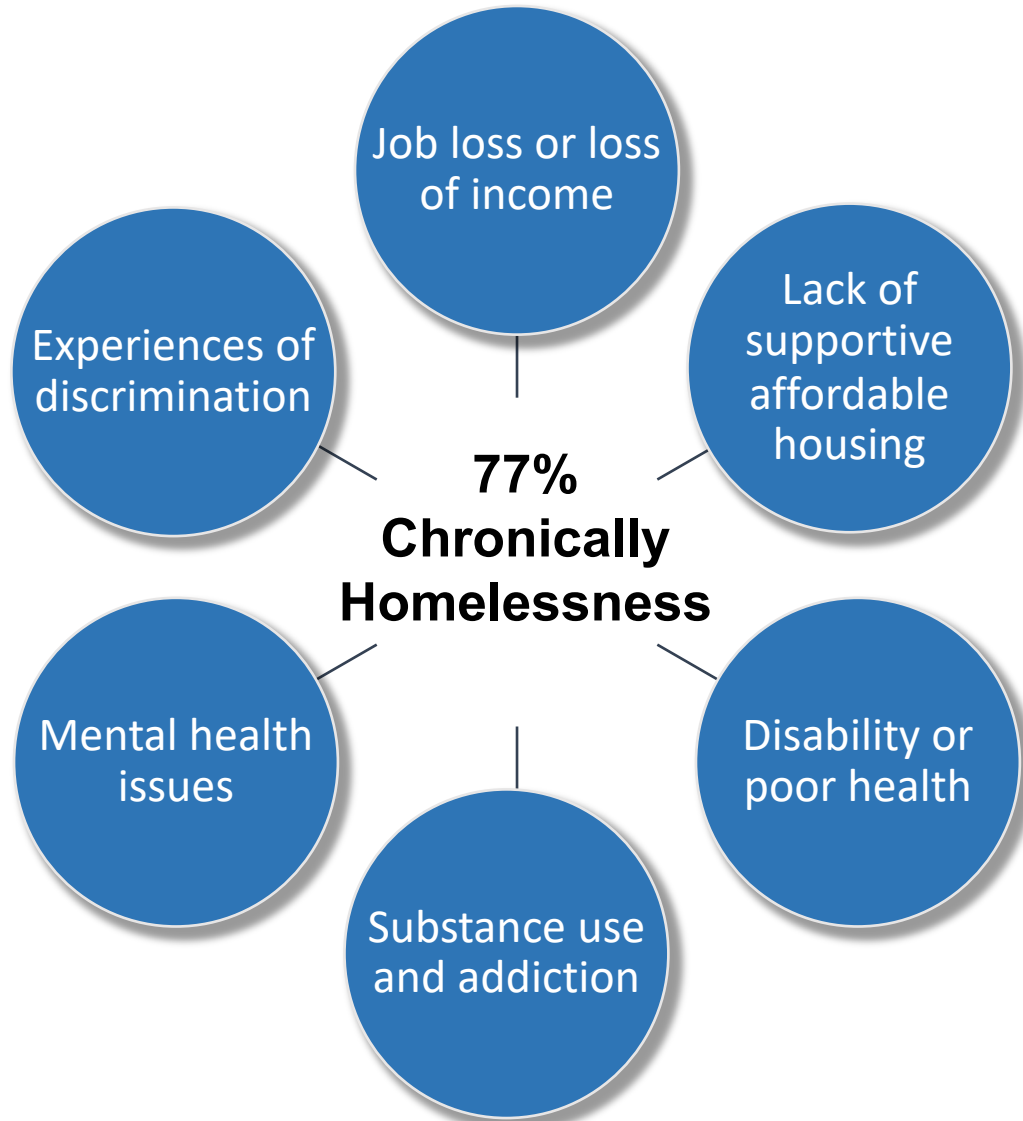
# A Historic and Present Reality

- Approximately 8000 people currently experiencing homelessness in Toronto – 77% chronically homeless
- Indigenous people and racialized individuals continue to be overrepresented among the homeless population
- Approximately 61% of people experiencing homelessness stayed in overnight shelter services only
- Approximately 50% of shelter users have a mental health issue

*Distribution of people experiencing homelessness: indoor and outdoor sites*



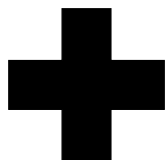




# Challenges Faced by Homeless Population



- Discrimination
- Lack of affordable housing
- Impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples
- Traumatic events
- Family violence and abuse
- Mental health issues
- Addiction issues
- Other physical and health issues

# System Pressures and Cost Avoidance

Emergency Shelters	Justice System	Hospital Stays	Affordable Rental Housing	Supportive Housing
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$3,347 per month pre-COVID-19</li><li>• \$6,667 per month currently</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$4,900 per month per homeless person in the justice system</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$12,200 per month for each homeless person in hospital</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$1,148 per month for permanent, stable housing</li></ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$2,000 per month to help individuals who need affordable housing with wrap around health supports</li></ul>

# Evidence for a Housing First Approach



Can be successfully implemented in an ethnically diverse, large urban centre

Can rapidly reduce homelessness

Results in cost savings, particularly for high-needs participants

Improves community functioning and quality of life

Lessons were learned to successfully implement and adapt a Housing First program

Change is not always measured in numbers



Whole-of-governments and whole-of-community cooperation and coordination are required for a **systems approach** to address homelessness



# No One Government Can Do This Alone

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## Government of Canada

- National Housing Strategy including funding partnerships
- Health and mental health funding
- Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy

## Province of Ontario

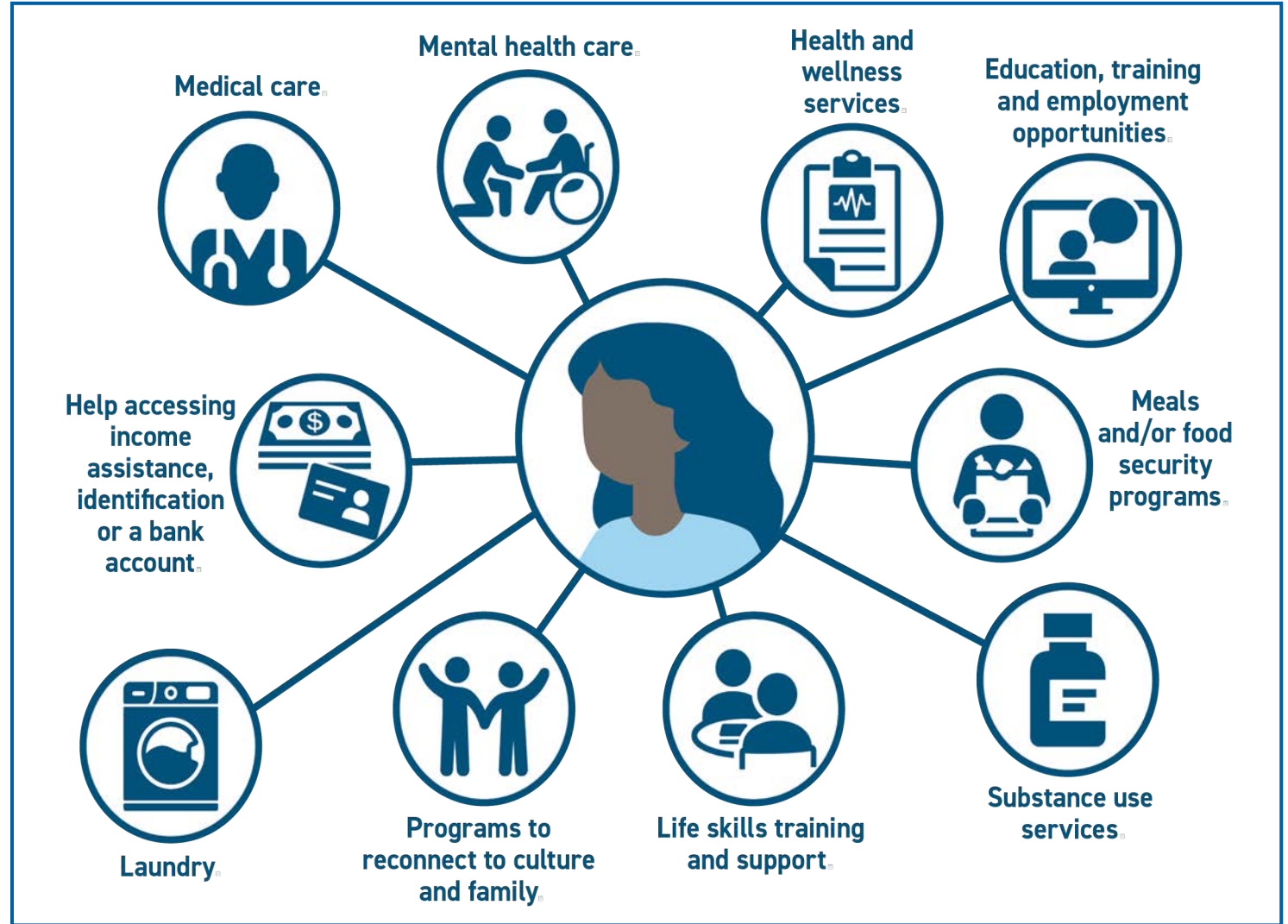
- Health and mental health services
- Employment and income supports
- Education, training and labour market integration
- Housing policies, programs and funding
- Justice system

## Municipal Governments

- Emergency and other shelters
- Social housing, affordable housing
- Emergency services: police, paramedics, fire
- Urban planning
- Community investment, infrastructure
- Public transit

# Supportive Housing: An Integrated Systems Approach

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# Toronto's Investments in a Systems Approach



# Parkdale Modular Supportive Housing: The Power of Partnerships

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- University Health Network (UHN), United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT), City of Toronto partnership
- First of its kind in Canada
- Support for 51 people from historically marginalized groups
- Estimated occupancy Spring 2022

# Victoria, BC: Principles for Supportive Housing

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- Resolve the housing crisis by re-aligning policies and programs to realize the human right to housing.
- Lead a full-scale transformation of the homeless-serving system.
- Improve standards and introduce accountability mechanisms.
- Engage people experiencing homelessness as equal partners.



# Supportive Housing Prescription

**City of Toronto** @cityoftoronto · 19 Oct 2020

Replying to @cityoftoronto

Shaunessey moved into her place recently & is connected with support from Native Child and Family Services, who are committed to see her prosper. The City & S2H team are happy to have been part of this major step forward in Shaunessey's journey &

**City of Toronto** @cityoftoronto · Mar 19

Meet Darin, seen in his new modular housing unit. #CityofTO's Streets to Homes Street (S2H) team connected with him and he worked diligently with Street Outreach Counsellor Hannah to secure a permanent home. Darin says he's beyond ecstatic to finally have a place to call his own.



*“This is a profound social issue — to make sure that people have the sense of inclusion and dignity to be able to be able to live in an affordable home in our city. So everybody can find a home here.”*

Mayor John Tory  
City Council  
November 10, 2021

Imagine:

Toronto as the first major  
city in North America to  
end chronic  
homelessness



Thank you