

MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS INFORMATION BRIEFING NOTE

Cliff # 1138139

PREPARED FOR: Honourable Minister Judy Darcy - **FOR INFORMATION**

TITLE: Minister meeting with Umbrella Society

PURPOSE: Discuss information about the Umbrella Society and its services.

BACKGROUND:

Umbrella Society (Umbrella) is a non-profit organization that provides support to individuals, and their families, experiencing substance use challenges. Umbrella is based in Victoria, BC and was founded in the year 2000. Umbrella's services are delivered in a range of settings (e.g., Island Health, local corrections, the Rapid Access Addiction Clinic, Addiction Medicine Consult Services, Support for Addictions through Management of Independence, and Foundry) and include:

- **Housing:** Staff operate three recovery houses, including two houses for men and one for women. There is no limit on the length of stay. Each house has different levels of support and programming. Residents can work, volunteer, or go to school while they follow their individualized recovery programs. Each resident is required to pay a monthly rent during their stay.
- **Counselling:** Family counselling is available by donation and educates families on addiction and coping mechanisms.
- **Outreach:** The peer outreach teams consists of people with lived experience with substance use challenges. The teams help others to navigate the system of care on their own recovery journeys.
- **Groups:** This program offers two different groups that provide advice, resource information, and psycho-educational support.

The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions (the Ministry) received a letter dated January 18, 2018 from Umbrella's Executive Director, Sharlene Law indicating the end of funding for a pilot project that supports local family physicians to connect their patients with substance use challenges to community supports and services. Ministry staff were invited and attended an educational workshop in March 2018 during which Umbrella requested additional funding. The society was directed to Island Health. Earlier this year the Minister and staff met with Umbrella to discuss the future of addictions and mental health services in the province.

DISCUSSION:

On Wednesday June 26, BC launched "A Pathway to Hope": A roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people in British Columbia. A Pathway to Hope lays out government's 10-year vision for mental health and addictions care that gets people the services they need in order to tackle problems early on and support their well-being. It identifies the priority actions government will take over the next three years to help people immediately and reduce demand on services down the road.

Umbrella will be interesting in learning more about the ongoing work to address the overdose crisis by starting to establish improved systems of addictions care. As a peer

support organization, Umbrella will also be interested in the peer support initiatives within the Roadmap:

- Development of peer support training curriculum and educational resources.
- Five new mental health peer support coordinator positions (one for each regional health authority).
- Expansion of Family Smart parent and youth peer support services and peers as members of the Integrated Child and Youth Teams.
- Expansion of Foundry youth centres with youth peer support.
- Development of a Provincial Peer Network, six new substance use-focused peer support coordinators for health authorities, six new Indigenous peer support coordinators, and regional Hope Teams with embedded peer support.

ADVICE:

- Given previous correspondence, Umbrella may request consideration for funding. It is recommended that these requests be forwarded to the appropriate staff.

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