



INQUEST

TOUCHING THE DEATH OF

Grant Faulkner

JURY VERDICT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

June 2018

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VERDICT/RECOMMENDATIONS**

CORONER'S COURT
Forensic Services and Coroner's Complex
25 Morton Shulman Avenue
Toronto ON M3M 0B1

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Office of the
Chief Coroner
Bureau du
coroner en chef

Verdict of Coroner's Jury Verdict du jury du coroner

The Coroners Act – Province of Ontario
Loi sur les coroners – Province de l'Ontario

Inquest into the death of:
Enquête sur le décès de :

Grant Faulkner

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JURY RECOMMENDATIONS RECOMMANDATIONS DU JURY

To the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, and community agencies providing services to homeless people in Scarborough:

The Province of Ontario ("Ontario"), the City of Toronto ("Toronto"), and community agencies providing services to homeless people in Scarborough should:

1. Develop communication strategies to improve the distribution of and access to information for people who are homeless (for the purposes of these recommendations, "homeless" shall include "precariously housed", "under-housed", "marginally housed", and other related terms) as to the services available to them in their communities, such as through the internet, software applications, telephone, text messages, and public building noticeboards (e.g., libraries). Information presentation should be accessible to all users, for example, visuals, fonts, languages, etc.
2. Improve coordination and information sharing, including information on best practices, regarding services related to homelessness and substance use within and between Toronto and its divisions, Ontario's ministries (including the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Housing, and Ministry of Municipal Affairs), community service partners working directly with homeless individuals, and the Government of Canada.
3. Ensure meaningful consultation with people who have lived experience of homelessness in the development and evaluation of programs and policies, including employment programs to assist homeless people.
4. Encourage the employment of people with lived experience of homelessness in the delivery of services to the homeless.
5. Ensure adequate funding to the Street Outreach program that connects service workers to the homeless, specifically mobile services.
6. Consider honouring Grant Faulkner's memory by establishing a permanent memorial in Scarborough, such as a parkette in his name, in order to provide the important ongoing public safety message that the protection of the homeless in Ontario is every citizen's responsibility.

To the Province of Ontario:

Ontario should:

7. Direct the Ministry of Community and Social Services, or another Ministry if appropriate, to:
 - a. Increase the amount of income provided to individuals receiving social assistance to reflect the real cost of shelter and basic needs;
 - b. Make available a shelter allowance for individuals who live outside, to help them secure housing, which could include banking the funds for later use towards housing;
 - c. Provide a transportation allowance to all social assistance recipients;
 - d. Revise the criteria applied to assess an individual as having been overpaid and measures taken to recover the overpayment so as to reduce hardship for homeless people;

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- e. Share aggregate data available to the Ministry on homeless individuals who receive social assistance with a view to assisting Ontario and municipalities to utilize available data to inform programming and related decisions;
 - f. Increase the available funding to Toronto for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative.
8. Direct the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, or another Ministry if appropriate, to:
- a. Ensure that there are adequate detox beds available for homeless individuals such as Mr. Faulkner to access alcohol addiction programs in Toronto, including Scarborough;
 - b. Ensure that alcohol treatment and rehabilitation programs are available, as needed, and take into account the unique needs of homeless individuals;
 - c. Promote the availability of such programs so that there is greater awareness of the services among those who are homeless and community service providers; and
 - d. Ensure the availability of case management support for homeless individuals with substance use issues.
9. Direct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and any other Ministry, as appropriate, to work with hospitals and the Office of the Chief Coroner to improve data collection and sharing of information on the deaths of homeless individuals with the municipality where the death occurred, whether through public health departments or otherwise as appropriate.
10. Direct the Ministry of Housing, or another Ministry, as appropriate, to address legislative requirements for rooming houses and increase funding for the construction and/or rehabilitation of rooming houses, to operate in coordination with the recommendation to Toronto that it standardize rooming house requirements in Toronto; and to reduce the likelihood that regulation will result in individuals becoming unhoused.
11. Explore ways for people experiencing homelessness to access information about homeless services from cell phones with no minutes remaining and no data plan. For example, allow 211/311 to be accessed at no charge to the caller.
12. Support availability of safe bicycling transportation for homeless persons, for instance by providing bicycles or funding for them, or access to bike-sharing programs.
13. Continue to participate in the National Housing Strategy.

To the City of Toronto:

Toronto should:

Rooming Houses

14. Take steps to consider, in consultation with community members, possible measures to increase and standardize access to safe rooming houses in the City, including Scarborough.

Services

15. Establish an implementation committee to ensure the recommendations made in the *Laying a Foundation* report are implemented in a timely manner. This should include reviewing the recommendations made in *Laying a Foundation*, assessing how the recommendations may be implemented, and the priority and feasibility of particular recommendations. The implementation committee should have appropriate representation, including responsible levels of government, people with lived experience of homelessness, and service providers.
16. Continue to operate both shelters and low-barrier overnight accommodation in Scarborough and, when considering opportunities to open additional services of this nature, consider the geography of Scarborough with respect to the location of new sites.

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17. Conduct a review of street outreach service levels in the City and Scarborough specifically, including reviewing the existing service levels for evenings, overnight, and during Extreme Cold/Heat Weather Alerts. As part of this review, determine how best to work with, and provide additional funding to, community service partners.
18. Determine whether service can be improved by enhanced use of case management services to work with the homeless population in Scarborough.
19. Review the process for following-up on incomplete applications for social housing from homeless individuals.
20. Expand the application of harm reduction principles and services in the shelter system for individuals who use alcohol.
21. Revise its existing policies to allow the provision of "survival" equipment and/or supplies (e.g. sleeping bags, fire retardant blankets, safe heat sources) and/or safety information to individuals who stay outside rather than accessing shelter/low-barrier overnight services. While finding appropriate housing is always a high priority, there must be enough flexibility to respond to individual needs and circumstances.

Transportation

22. Advocate to the Toronto Transit Commission and Metrolinx to emphasize the importance of ensuring appropriate access to transportation for individuals who are homeless, and consult with members of the Scarborough community when it is considering these issues to ensure that the transition to Presto technology does not create barriers.
23. Enforce sidewalk snow removal in areas affecting vulnerable populations who are accessing services, including at locations run by community partners.
24. Notify Toronto Bike Share that homeless people in Scarborough use bicycles for transportation, to consider program expansion.

Access to Information

25. Encourage the availability of wifi at any site providing services to the homeless, including shelters, respite centres, drop-ins, etc.
26. Consider the feasibility of providing secure cell phone charging services in shelters, respite centres, drop-ins, etc. "Secure" here means that clients feel confident their phone will not be used or stolen while charging.

Data Collection

27. In consultation with community agencies, the Province, academics, and members of the community (including those with lived experience of homelessness), determine how the collection of objective, reliable, and useful data about homeless individuals can be improved to assist in developing appropriate policies and programs, as well as measuring outcomes, with particular emphasis on identifying data for Scarborough.

Standards

28. Develop, in consultation with community partners and service users, appropriate final standards for respite centres in terms of facility management, health and safety, and other services to be available.

Training

29. Deliver information on fire safety tips prepared by the Ontario Fire Marshal to outreach workers and community partners.

To the Agincourt Community Services Association (ACSA):

ACSA should:

30. Establish communication with services in nearby municipalities (e.g., Markham) that are also used by ACSA's clients.

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31. Consider the feasibility of providing secure cell phone charging stations to clients. "Secure" here means that clients feel confident their phone will not be used or stolen while charging.
32. Implement supports for their clients who use bicycles as transportation, perhaps drawing on the experiences of other Toronto organizations.

To the Office of the Fire Marshal:

The Office of the Fire Marshal should:

33. In consultation with community service providers, municipalities, and people with lived experience of homelessness, develop fire safety tips targeted toward homeless people that identify risks and best safety practices, and share such tips on a regular basis with community service providers across the Greater Toronto Area, including Scarborough.

To the Toronto Transit Commission and Metrolinx:

The Toronto Transit Commission and Metrolinx should:

34. Ensure appropriate access to transportation for individuals who are homeless, recognizing the concerns around the replacement of tokens by Presto technology, and in doing so, consult appropriately, including with members of the Scarborough community.

All Municipalities in Ontario:

All municipalities in Ontario should:

35. Consider zoning that might increase the availability of housing, such as rooming houses, inclusionary zoning, laneway houses, single family use conversions, etc.

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