



Marit Stiles
MPP / Députée, Davenport

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Dr. Kevin Smith
President and CEO
University Health Network
R. Fraser Elliott Building, 1st Floor
190 Elizabeth St.
Toronto, ON
M5G 2C4
VIA Email

August 5, 2021

Dear Dr. Smith,

I represent the provincial riding of Davenport, home to the largest population of Portuguese speakers in the country as well as a sizeable and growing population of Spanish-speakers.

In March, I was approached by community members and local community agencies serving the Portuguese community to alert me to the fact that the Portuguese and Spanish language mental health and addictions clinics were no longer accepting referrals at Toronto Western Hospital, and that patients were being asked to join a general clinic that may or may not provide services in their own language. I have also been in touch with Dr. Jose Silveira, one of the founders of the Portuguese program, to learn more about the essential nature of these supports and their benefit to my constituents.

On March 15, I wrote the Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions to ask them to intervene to ensure that provincial funding for culturally appropriate mental health care was being used for its intended purposes, and for the clinics to be reopened. This letter was followed by a phone call with Minister Elliott where I further explained the impact the potential closure of the clinic was having, and asked that she address it with UHN.

In the intervening time, there has been no change in access to the Portuguese mental health clinic, and the Spanish-language clinic appears to have also been shuttered. At a time when the mental health impacts of the pandemic are widely reported, it is urgent and essential that people receive care in their own language. It goes without saying that mental health care in particular depends on being able to communicate how you are feeling, and to understand ongoing treatment options.

I would therefore request a meeting with you to further discuss the future of UHN's community-based mental health clinics and so that we can work together to restore these vital services as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marit Stiles', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Marit Stiles
MPP Davenport**