

March 14, 2024

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Ms. Cyndy Dearden and Ms. Maria Talotta  
Youth Wellness Hub Ontario

Dear Ms. Cyndy Dearden and Ms. Maria Talotta:

**Re: Letter of Support for Youth Wellness Hub Ontario Application**

As a member of the North Bay Community Safety and Well Being (CSWB) Advisory Group and a Co-Chair on the Muskoka, Nipissing and Parry Sound Children and Youth Planning Table, the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit supports initiatives that enhance mental health and resilience in youth and as well prevent or reduce the use of substances. The expansion of the 140 Elmwood Youth Hub and designation as an Ontario Youth Wellness Hub will provide an opportunity to reduce sources of stress (e.g. through a safer environment) and strengthen protective factors (e.g. through skill development) in youth across our Health Unit district.

In the heart of North Bay and easily accessible by public transport, 140 Elmwood is owned and operated by the Children's Aid Society of the District of Nipissing and Parry Sound (NPSCAS). Transformed from an elementary school through a significant contribution from the Beauchamp family, this space is becoming known as a dynamic and inclusive community hub. It's a welcoming space where youth have access to an extensive range of resources and information, thanks to the collaboration and support of more than 20 partnering organizations. From youth-led initiatives and mentorship programs to Indigenous cultural programming, access to primary care and sexual services through an on-site Nurse Practitioner's office in partnership with VON, LGBTQS+ support, and beyond, 140 Elmwood represents a model of integrated care and support. It is a centre for mental health wellness, academic empowerment, and career development, complemented by practical resources like a youth pantry and clothing boutique, all of which demonstrate 140 Elmwood's alignment with the YWHO core components. The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit has found it to be an ideal environment to deliver some of our youth-focused workshops.

Guided by the insights of an active Youth Advisory Council which provides feedback to the Board of Directors through the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee, the data-informed programming of 140 Elmwood is designed to not just meet, but also predict and adapt to the changing needs of youth.

140 Elmwood is a versatile venue that hosts a range of youth organizations, including ProSports Youth Dodgeball, Panthers Baseball, Dreamcoat Fantasy Theatre, and various other groups, creating a vibrant and dynamic

*Your lifetime partner in healthy living.  
Votre partenaire à vie pour vivre en santé.*

[myhealthunit.ca](http://myhealthunit.ca)

📍 345 Oak Street West,  
North Bay, ON P1B 2T2

☎ 1-800-563-2808  
705-474-1400

📠 705-474-8252

📍 90 Bowes Street, Suite 201,  
Parry Sound, ON P2A 2L7

☎ 1-800-563-2808  
705-746-5801

📠 705-746-2711

community hub. Furthermore, 140 Elmwood is actively expanding programming to cater to the unique needs of New Canadians as well as children of early childhood ages by becoming an EarlyON satellite location. The potential for Elmwood to further enrich and expand its reach is boundless, making it a pivotal time for us to come together in support of this vital community resource. The remarkable 90% participant return rate and the expanding network of supporters are testament to the quality of the programming offered at 140 Elmwood.

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit is excited about the alignment of the current programs and the vision for 140 Elmwood with the principles of the newly created Planet Youth Nipissing. Planet Youth is a population-wide primary prevention process designed to have long-term impact in communities, reducing youth substance use through creating healthy built and social environments. Programs and activities which provide structured leisure time opportunities to promote physical and psychological safety are essential to the success of the Planet Youth model. 140 Elmwood, given its rich and diverse programming is ideally suited to contribute to the Planet Youth model.

With the approval of the business case and YWHO designation, 140 Elmwood will enhance its capacity to fill significant gaps in prevention, health promotion and early access to integrated care, promote connection, and provide much needed support to youth.

I understand and believe that 140 Elmwood is uniquely positioned to play an important role in fostering a sense of belonging and building more resilient youth. I strongly urge the YWHO to approve the designation and funding of 140 Elmwood as an official YWHO site.

Sincerely,



Carol Zimbalatti, M.D., CCFP, MPH  
Medical Officer of Health  
North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit