



Saskatoon Health Region
Mental Health & Addiction Services, Administration
Room 263, Ellis Hall, Royal University Hospital
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Phone: 655-6735 Fax: 655-6707

October 20, 2014

Dr. Morris Markentin
631 20th Street West
Saskatoon, SK.
S7M 0X8

Dear Dr. Markentin,

Please accept this letter of support for the HIV hospice initiative, known as *Sanctum*. I want to applaud you and your group of dedicated individuals who have identified this significant care gap, and who have taken the initiative to put forward a meaningful and evidence-based proposal for care.

As the Director of Mental Health & Addiction Services, we have attempted to take a lead role, to the extent possible, to alleviate the dire circumstances of those who are experiencing the impact of HIV, especially when paired with an addiction. However, we have not been able to provide the residential care that so many of our clients often need as this disease progresses to significantly impact their ability to manage independently. Especially of concern is the number of people with advanced HIV who do not have appropriate housing, or the care required, to manage at these times.

Our data certainly shows that those with HIV and concurrent drug addiction also struggle with infections and require lengthy antibiotic treatment at times. This too, has been a struggle in our acute care system. For some, institutionalized care is problematic in structure and approach. A home-based environment is far more appropriate for the lengthy stay required with antibiotic treatment, especially where individuals can be better supported with co-occurring addiction challenges. The proposed location is also perfect as it is located across the street from our Brief & Social Detox, allowing us to work in collaboration with those who may need assistance with detox.

The *Sanctum* proposal is a program that can not only address a significant gap in our community, but can deliver the service in a way that ensures patient dignity throughout the care experience. This population is arguably the most

vulnerable in our society, frequently dealing with poverty and racism, in addition to their serious challenges with physical and mental health.

Mental Health & Addiction Services looks forward to working in collaboration to make Sanctum a successful program in our community and would be happy to engage in planning as it moves forward to become a reality.

Congratulations on your hard work thus far.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy Muggli', written in a cursive style.

Tracy Muggli BA, MSW, RSW
Director, Mental Health & Addiction Services
Saskatoon Health Region