

Submission from Wayne Campbell

Niagara Region Public Health and Social Services has declared mental health, homelessness and addiction as a crisis in the Niagara Region, but calling it a crisis and acknowledging will not result in any immediate resources or funding to address the emergency.

Letters from the Chair can be ignored, and a crisis does not initiate the emergency legislation where the Province is required to respond. Naming a crisis does not give the Region of Niagara any advantage to address these critical issues.

According to the Province of Ontario Emergency Response Plan (2008), Canadian municipalities are free to declare states of emergencies in response to “any situation or impending situation caused by the forces of nature, an accident, an intentional act or otherwise that constitutes a danger of major proportions to life or property.”

11 of 12 of Niagara's local-area municipalities have unanimously endorsed the request for Niagara Regional Council to declare a state of emergency on mental health, homelessness, and addiction.

Niagara rose from 1.6 (consistent across 2018 and 2019) to 2.8 overdose deaths weekly (March to August of 2020) and the number of suspected overdoses rose from 499 in 2019 to 625 suspected overdoses in 2020, as reported by Niagara EMS, and 55 suspected overdoses have already been recorded by Niagara EMS for 2021 [https://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health\\_wellness/alc-sub-abuse/drugs/opioids.aspx](https://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/alc-sub-abuse/drugs/opioids.aspx)

The Niagara Region recorded 625 residents- including 144 children in March 2018 and a shelter capacity of 109.4 percent in the first four months of 2018 and furthermore  
The number of people found to be experiencing homelessness: 625 (2018)

The occupancy rate of participating emergency shelters on the night of count: 117% (2018)

The number of individuals estimated to be living in transitional housing: 237 (2018)

The number of individuals estimated to be living on the streets: 38 (2018)

The number of individuals estimated to be living in emergency and VAW shelters; crisis beds: 350 (2018)

Niagara has a higher emergency department visit rate for self-harm than the province of Ontario and since 2009, emergency department visits in Niagara related to self-harm have continued to increase significantly. (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/statistics/injury/default.aspx#selfharm>)

In 2019, 14.2 per cent of secondary students had seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months.

According to statistics Canada the Niagara suicide rate is 9.8 deaths per 100,000 compared to 7.7 deaths per 100,000 in Ontario.

**I am requesting that Niagara Regional Council direct Regional Chair, Jim Bradley to declare a state of emergency on addiction, homelessness and mental health in the Regional Municipality of Niagara.**