

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **STOP 'REVOLVING DOOR' OF INCARCERATION AND HOMELESSNESS: NEW STUDY CALLS FOR INVESTMENT IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

**TORONTO** - Last year, 70,903 prisoners were released from Ontario's provincial correctional institutions, a number that will likely swell in the wake of new federal legislation, Bill C-10. The need for supports in the community and transitional housing is now greater than ever.

*"Effective, Just and Humane: A Case for Client-Centered Collaboration,"* a new report from the John Howard Society of Ontario's Centre of Research, Policy & Program Development shows that recently released prisoners facing homelessness have complex social and health issues. Access to safe and affordable transitional housing, something that comes in very short supply in Ontario, is desperately needed to support this population's efforts to re-enter society.

"The research evidence confirms that addressing the fundamentals, including housing, not only makes communities safer by reducing recidivism, but it's also better for individual and population health." -Michael Shapcott, Director, Housing and Innovation, Wellesley Institute

Today in Ontario people with past criminal justice involvement who are homeless - a hugely stigmatized population - must navigate the social service system on their own, accessing services and programs without any defined plan.

"Complex issues require equally sophisticated responses," states Michelle Keast, Director of the *Centre of Research, Policy & Program Development at the John Howard Society of Ontario*, adding that homelessness is not just a housing issue.

"Individuals reintegrating into our communities face all kinds of barriers to accessing the supports they need, and are often left on their own to navigate this complex system. Unfortunately, they tend to slip through the cracks and cycle back into the justice system. To stop the revolving door, we need to take an integrated, strategic and inclusive approach to more effectively deal with homelessness."

Ontarians with past criminal justice involvement are often denied access to social services and treatment programs on account of their criminal record.

Poverty, mental illness, addictions, unemployment and lack of stable housing, are all associated with both homelessness and involvement in the criminal justice system. Simply providing housing will not solve the problem of homelessness for this population – everything must be addressed. The findings of the present study, which examined John Howard Society of Toronto's housing program, underscore the benefits of collaboration and demonstrate that multi-sectoral housing program models can positively impact a number of different areas in a client's life, over and above finding housing.

"Every individual we can assist in breaking the cycle of recidivism, carries a large financial savings to tax payers and by definition makes our city safer." - Greg Rogers, Executive Director, John Howard Society of Toronto

To read the report *"Effective, Just and Humane: A Case for Client-Centered Collaboration,"* please go to: [www.johnhoward.on.ca](http://www.johnhoward.on.ca)

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