

August 10, 2022

Letter to Mayor and Windsor City Councilors, Warden and County Councilors and Members of Provincial Parliament

The City of Windsor should be proud of supporting IRIS for the **past 20 years**. Our home is a gem for Windsor and Essex County, and founded by family members who were unable to find suitable housing with supports for their persistent seriously mentally ill relatives. Many of our residents would be homeless without our support.

We respectfully asked for a per diem increase to our funding, as a Housing with Supports home, when we wrote to you in April 2022.

Since then, we have been doing everything possible to ensure that our community-valued program can continue. However, in such a very short time we have experienced the following:

- a. Increase in minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour – IRIS was already paying \$16.00 but we have now become unattractive to new staff and have experience turnover in staff.
- b. We have a one-million-dollar mortgage up for renewal this year, we are trying to determine if we will face a significant increase in interest. It is our understanding that other charities in Windsor received funding to be able to provide their services without the burden of carrying a large mortgage or paying rent.
- c. Increase in costs to obtain insurance with more rigorous form requirements regarding covid-19, and of course increased food, supplies and utilities costs, due to the high rate of inflation, which shows no sign of abating in the immediate future.
- d. Pension income increases for residents on OAS that reduce their cost of care for the City that has not passed to the homes. This could allow the City to offer a modest increase in the per diem.
- e. ODSP will now increase by 5%, in September 2022. Please pass this directly to the homes.

There has been a pattern, over the years, to freeze and thaw the funding we receive. We are currently in the freeze cycle, and have been since 2019. We are requesting a \$5 raise in our per diem to ensure that we can continue to provide quality services. We also request an indexing of our funding to inflation, to break this pattern of chronic under-funding.

I am confident that we will be able to work together to come up with a viable solution to keep IRIS open into the future. We are certainly willing to meet with members of Council and/or administration at any time to discuss and highlight the challenges we are facing. We can't do this alone; we need your help.

Karen Soulliere, Chair

IRIS Residential Inns and Services