

August 1, 2025

Kevin Smith
Chief Executive Officer
University Health Network

RE: Closure of Asian Initiative in Mental Health (AIM) Program

Dear Kevin:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Hong Fook Mental Health Association, we are writing to you today as a valued and long-standing partner in mental health care for the East and Southeast Asian communities in the Greater Toronto Area. We deeply appreciate our decade-long collaboration on the Integrative Behavioural Group Therapy (IBGT) program, which has positively impacted over 1,000 lives, and we are pleased to learn that this partnership will continue.

It was, however, with great concern that we learned about the sudden closure of the Asian Initiative in Mental Health (AIM) program at Toronto Western Hospital. AIM has been an invaluable and, frankly, rare force in creating accessible, culturally and linguistically specific psychiatric assessment, consultation, and treatment for Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking individuals in our community. Its dedicated services, including the Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP) program, have filled a critical gap for those experiencing mood disorders, OCD, PTSD, and psychotic disorders.

Our concern, which is widely shared within the community we serve, stems not only from the abruptness of the closure but also from the apparent lack of prior consultation with community stakeholders. At a time when culturally competent mental health care is demonstrably so needed, the absence of dialogue has led to uncertainty about how this transition will impact Asian community members who rely on such specialized support. We are also concerned that this lack of direct communication with the community risks escalating questions and heightened concerns, where proactive dialogue could otherwise foster understanding and facilitate a smoother path forward for those impacted. This situation underscores persistent challenges our communities face, including underrepresentation in strategic and service planning and historically disproportionate resource allocation, despite East and Southeast Asians representing 15% of the total population in the GTA.

As an organization committed to championing culturally competent mental healthcare, we believe it is our shared responsibility as partners in care to seek clarity on behalf of the community. We are keen to understand the implications of this change on the continued provision of culturally competent mental health services and what this means for UHN's ongoing dedication to equitable care for our shared community. We would

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also appreciate learning more about the decision-making process that led to the closure, as it would greatly assist us in addressing community concerns.

Hong Fook stands ready to offer our support in navigating any emerging gaps and to facilitate meaningful dialogue with the community, including any communication UHN develops to address concerns. We have prepared our organization to respond as best as we can as questions come in from clients and concerned community members, and are offering information and referrals to those who have approached us. We are also exploring how we can best support service providers receiving redirected patients to ensure they continue to receive language and culturally specific care.

We invite you and your colleagues to a conversation to discuss these critical matters further. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Winnie Tsang
Board Chair
Hong Fook Mental Health Association

Andrew Chung
Executive Director
Hong Fook Mental Health Association