



## SCARBOROUGH COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

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### **Decision of the Board of Scarborough Community Legal Services (SCLS) on the GTA Legal Clinics Transformation Project Vision Report:**

1. SCLS supports the principles set out in the Vision Report (Executive Summary, p 2) however, at this time we cannot endorse the model recommended where the 14 GTA clinics would be replaced by 3 to 5 larger clinics. We believe that more evidence is needed to show that the possible benefits outlined in the Vision Report would be realized and that this model is in fact the best option available.

SCLS shares the concerns regarding access points, the efficiency of larger clinics, connection to the communities and a single model option that the Board of West Toronto Community Legal Services outlined in its decision regarding the Vision Report. We do not believe a “one size fits all approach” is necessarily the only way to address the systemic weaknesses identified in the Vision Report (Vision Report, p 2) and we believe other alternatives should be fully investigated

2. Community legal clinic transformation in Scarborough must recognize that Scarborough is, and has historically been, under-resourced in services including legal services and relevant social services. Without addressing the complex growing need and population pressures no meaningful transformation will be achieved in providing legal services.

3. Low income residents of Scarborough must have a full range of legal services provided in locations that are accessible to them. The geographic catchment area should not be increased to include other parts of Toronto.

4. Low income residents of Scarborough deserve additional staff resources to bring the level of poverty law services for our Low Income population closer to the provincial average.

5. SCLS has serious concerns with the concept of “community access points”. The proposed transformation in the vision report relies heavily on these access points which cannot be materialized without clarity and thoughtful planning. From our experience on the ground and the complexities in Scarborough we propose this concept should be piloted, with appropriate resources and outreach support, so that its effectiveness can be proven before there is any further implementation of the Vision Report.

6. SCLS will continue to participate in the GTA Transformation Project and is committed to working with West Scarborough Community Legal Services to develop a made-in-Scarborough model of legal clinic transformation that works best for the low income marginalized residents of Scarborough.