

# WILLOWDALE COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

## VISION REPORT MOTION

Willowdale Community Legal Services (“WCLS”) is firmly committed to the clinic-led process to transform and improve the clinic system in the Greater Toronto Area (“GTA”). We believe that this is a positive process and we would like to continue to play an active role in it. WCLS believes that its services can be improved and clinic services throughout the GTA can be improved in terms of client service, community development and outreach, efficiency and effectiveness. WCLS’s Board believes that clinics in the GTA can better service the low income population of the GTA by transforming their service delivery models.

The following principles are critical to any effort to transform services offered by GTA legal clinics:

- Community-based Boards of Directors must continue to set strategic directions for clinics throughout the transformation process
- There should be more front line and direct client service
- Core areas of legal service should be more consistent across the GTA
- There should be increased emphasis on community development and outreach
- Resources for community legal clinics should be equitably distributed amongst the low income population of the GTA.

Legal Aid Ontario (“LAO”) is a crucial partner in any effort to transform legal clinics. LAO should continue to support the effort of GTA clinics to transform their services and provide clinics with the time and necessary resources to fulfill their transformation goals.

WCLS’s Board supports the principles set out in pages 2-3 of the Executive Summary of the Vision Report.

Before considering approval of a new clinic model similar to that set out in the Vision Report, WCLS would require the following:

1. A framework for delivery of client services including more evidence and detail regarding “access points.” Such a framework would outline the proposed operating model, roles and responsibilities, and governance structure. WCLS’s Board shares the many unanswered questions and concerns related to the proposed “access points.” This is needed prior to the development of an implementation plan;
2. Concrete evidence through pilot or other relevant projects, that the model would result in efficiencies;
3. A plan for community-based governance; and,
4. Preliminary information on new funds to be distributed in the near future. WCLS’s Board believes that other alternatives must also be further explored, including possible mergers, pilot projects, hubs and a combination of approaches tailored to different parts of the City.

Dated: January 27, 2015

Ben Torres, Chair, Board of Directors, WCLS