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To: The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

777 Bay Street, 16th floor
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The lack of affordable and attainable housing in Toronto is at the root of many of the city's most pressing social challenges. As a healthcare provider serving communities across the region and with nearly 500 healthcare workers in Toronto, SE Health has seen firsthand how the housing crisis negatively affects the well-being of our frontline staff (including Personal Support Workers, Registered Practical Nurses, and Registered Nurses), many of whom struggle to find affordable housing within the city they serve.

As a national not-for-profit social enterprise founded in Toronto 115 years ago, we fully support Spotlight Development's request for a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) to facilitate the creation of a much-needed affordable housing and mixed-use development at 1635 Lawrence Avenue West in the City of Toronto. Housing affordability challenges have placed tremendous strain on Torontonians, affecting not only financial stability but also overall health and well-being. The city is in urgent need of solutions that will expand housing options across the housing continuum, and this proposal is an opportunity to make a meaningful impact.

Toronto must increase the supply of new homes to meet the needs of current and future residents. Housing costs have increased significantly in Toronto, with the average market rent for a one-bedroom in purpose-built apartments increasing by 46% between 2013 and 2022 (City of Toronto Housing Data Book, 2023). Meanwhile, waitlists for affordable housing continue to grow, leaving thousands of individuals and families in precarious living situations.

The proposed development, which will facilitate approximately 1,314 units of affordable and attainable housing, is a game-changer, offering a tangible solution to Toronto's housing crisis. Spotlight Development's commitment to affordability, wrap-around support services, and community-focused design ensures that these new homes will foster inclusivity and long-term stability.

We cannot afford to miss this opportunity. By endorsing this proposal, we have a chance to make a real difference in the lives of many Torontonians, creating not just affordable housing, but also good homes that strengthen communities and improve quality of life.

As a healthcare partner, employer of many Torontonians, and an advocate for affordable housing, SE Health strongly endorses this initiative. Ensuring access to stable and affordable housing is critical for the financial stability and wellbeing of essential workers including healthcare staff. We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss how this project aligns with the broader needs of Toronto's communities. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us directly.

Thank you for considering this important proposal.

Sincerely,

Tazim Virani, Senior Vice President, Social Impact & Global Initiatives
SE Health