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Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
#1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC

Your Worship and Councillors:

Re: Assertive Community Treatment teams

Pacifica Housing would like to take this opportunity to write in support of the proposal to increase VicPD's participation in the ACT teams.

The 4 ACT teams are comprised of nursing staff, outreach workers, social workers, a probation officer, a police officer, a psychiatrist and a Ministry of Social Development worker. The ACT's mission is to work together to improve the individual's health, commit fewer crimes and reduce the number of contacts with police and visits to the hospital.

Cst. Sue Hamilton, who is the only officer currently supporting the 4 ACT teams (320 clients), has been doing amazing work in the community. Hamilton has publicly expressed her commitment to keeping individuals struggling with mental illness and/or addiction, out of the criminal justice system.

The money that is being allocated to adding two more officers to work with Hamilton, is part of VicPD's two year plan to launch their Mental Health Strategy. In their Mental Health Strategy VicPD mention the fact that the two additional officers, along with Hamilton will receive ongoing training in the areas of mental health, non-violent crisis intervention, addiction and OD's.

The reality is that police are usually the first responders to calls regarding people in distress. We would be in favour of increasing the chances of these calls being attended to by an ACT police officer, which is what the addition of two more officers would do – increase those chances.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Dean Fortin
Executive Director