

Region of Peel declares epidemic of intimate-partner violence

By Zachary Roman

Advocacy efforts have led to formal acknowledgement of an intimate-partner violence epidemic in Peel.

At the Region of Peel's June 22 Council meeting, Rebecca Pacheco, a coordinator for the Peel Committee Against Women Abuse (PCAWA), made a delegation to lawmakers and asked that it declare intimate-partner and gender-based violence an epidemic.

Regional Councillors unanimously supported PCAWA's request.

The move came just one day after the City of Brampton also declared an intimate-partner and gender-based violence epidemic. Peel and Brampton are the 26th and 27th municipalities in Ontario to declare intimate-partner violence an epidemic.

PCAWA will soon be delegating to Mississauga City Council and Town of Caledon Council to ask for the same declaration.

According to PCAWA, declaring intimate-partner violence to be an epidemic was one of 86 jury recommendations that came out of the Renfrew Inquest.

The Renfrew Inquest happened in June 2022. It was a coroner's inquest that asked jurors to suggest ways to end gender-based violence after the 2015 murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam in (or near) Renfrew County.

According to PCAWA, every 48 hours a woman or girl is killed by an act of violence in Canada. In Peel, four femicides occurred in 2022 and 2 have already occurred in 2023.

Pacheco said more and more municipalities declaring intimate-partner violence to be an epidemic means it's an issue that demands immediate attention from the Province.

"We need our provincial government to listen to the municipalities and regions across the province as we're calling out for support, leadership and funding at a provincial level," said Pacheco.

PCAWA said the Province's 2023 budget does not provide the amount of investment needed to respond to "rising rates of gender-based violence across the Province."