



55 University Avenue, 15th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2H7
www.archdisabilitylaw.ca

(416) 482-8255 (Main) 1 (866) 482-ARCH (2724) (Toll Free)
(416) 482-1254 (TTY) 1 (866) 482-ARCT (2728) (Toll Free)
(416) 482-2981 (FAX) 1 (866) 881-ARCF (2723) (Toll Free)

ARCH Statement on Deaths of Persons with Mental Health Disabilities by Police

ARCH Disability Law Centre is deeply saddened and decries the deaths of persons with mental health disabilities at the hands of police officers.

Over the last three months, at least three persons with mental health disabilities have died in the Toronto and Peel Regions as a result of interactions with police officers. Ejaz Choudry, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, and D'Andre Campbell died because police officers are ill-equipped to respond appropriately to persons experiencing a mental health crisis. These were preventable deaths that should not have occurred. Unfortunately, this is not a new narrative, nor is it uncharted territory.

There has been much discourse on the issue of police interaction with persons with mental health disabilities. SIU Investigations into police conduct have opened and closed, public inquests by the Coroner's Office have been conducted, recommendations have been made, statistics studied, and reports published, and yet, persons with mental health disabilities continue to experience disproportionate violence and death at the hands of police. This disproportionate impact is felt acutely and particularly by persons from racialized communities and those who experience other intersecting grounds of discrimination. While the lives recently lost occurred in Toronto or the Greater Toronto Region, the problem persists throughout the province.

All persons with mental health disabilities have the right to appropriate accommodations and de-escalation, when experiencing a mental health crisis, including opportunity to interact with mental health workers instead of police officers.

ARCH has been monitoring the issue and will continue to do so. If you are a person with a mental health disability living in Ontario and need legal advice about interacting with the police you may contact ARCH's Summary Advice and Referral Service at:

Tel: (416) 482-8255 or 1-866-482-2724

Email: archintake@lao.on.ca