



SUPPORTING SURVIVORS
OF ABUSE AND BRAIN INJURY
THROUGH RESEARCH

Jane Curtis, Interim President & CEO
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
650 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB

August 15, 2025

Dear Ms. Curtis,

Supporting Survivors of Abuse and Brain Injury through Research (SOAR) is deeply concerned about the closure of Winnipeg's specialized intimate partner violence–brain injury (IPV-BI) program at the Pan Am Clinic. The program, led by Dr. Michael Ellis was unique in Canada, and was a gamechanger for survivors of IPV-BI.

As the only organization in the country with a singular focus on IPV-BI, SOAR has had the privilege of working with Dr. Ellis, and knows well the value of the services he offered, including timely, targeted, trauma- and brain injury–informed assessments and care for survivors of IPV-BI through blows to the head and face, and strangulation—injuries that are common, repetitive, and too often unrecognized and undiagnosed in healthcare settings.

Survivors of IPV-BI frequently live with long-term cognitive, physical, and emotional impacts: memory loss, dizziness, difficulty regulating emotions, fatigue, and trouble focusing or learning new information. These invisible injuries can severely disrupt their ability to parent, work, maintain safe housing, and navigate legal or child protection processes. Without specialized care, survivors are left to struggle in silence, often misunderstood or misdiagnosed, while their health and safety deteriorate.

The clinic addressed a critical and long-standing gap in Manitoba's health system by providing survivors with expert assessment, medical documentation, and connections to support, all in a culturally safe, survivor-focused environment. Its closure not only removes a rare and essential resource but also signals to survivors that their injuries and needs are not a priority.

SOAR is calling on the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to act immediately to reinstate this program and to ensure it is funded in a sustainable and permanent way. We are ready to offer our support, expertise, and consultation to help design and deliver a reinstated program that builds on the clinic's proven success, is accessible across the province, and is embedded within a network of trauma- and brain injury–informed care.

Sincerely,

Karen Mason
Co-founder and executive director
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