

November 21, 2022

The Honourable Sylvia Jones  
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health  
[sylvia.jones@ontario.ca](mailto:sylvia.jones@ontario.ca)

The Honourable Michael Tibollo  
Associate Minister, Mental Health and Addictions  
[michael.tibollo@ontario.ca](mailto:michael.tibollo@ontario.ca)

Dear Honourable Ministers:

**Re: Supervised Inhalation Services in Peterborough**

Following years of effective collaboration, Peterborough's Consumption and Treatment Services site (CTS) officially opened in June 2022. Since then with provincial funding this has become a life-saving service in our community with utilization rates steadily increasing, culminating in over 3,000 visits by nearly 200 individuals as of the end of October.

Every visit to the CTS represents a potential life saved or injury prevented, a new service connection or referral, and a reduction in public drug use and drug litter. Together, these outcomes enhance individual health and public safety, while relieving pressure on the health system and reducing demand for emergency services. In the context of escalating drug-related harms, these results confirm that the CTS is an invaluable asset that is bolstering our region's collaborative response to the drug poisoning crisis, which last year claimed the lives of almost 2900 Ontarians.

Despite the early success of the CTS in our community, health surveillance data reveals that more work remains to effectively address the drug poisoning crisis. In particular, while the Peterborough CTS is equipped to serve the needs of people who use drugs via injection, intranasal, or oral routes, inhalation is not currently permitted under Ontario's provincially-funded Consumption and Treatment Services program. This gap persists despite growing evidence demonstrating need for tailored services to address rising rates of inhalation drug use locally and across the province.

Locally, deaths due to inhalation have increased annually since 2019. In 2021, almost half of all opioid-related deaths were attributable to smoking opioids, compared to less than 10% who died from injection drug use. Harm reduction service providers have also reported that distribution of safer smoking supplies doubled in 2021, outpacing transactions involving needles by a ratio of 6 to 1. Similar trends have been observed across the province, indicating that additional supports are required beyond the municipal level.

Through conversations with our provincial representative, MPP Dave Smith, he has signalled support that provincial CTS program expansion to permit supervised inhalation is an important need. He has shared concern that in its absence trust, with people who use drugs via inhalation and may be turned away, cannot effectively be built. We are grateful for this support, and echo his belief that such investments are necessary to ensure an inclusive, accessible, and effective service model that will meet the diverse needs of individuals that are impacted by the drug poisoning crisis.

To achieve these goals, provincial authorization and funding is required to reduce regulatory barriers, offset additional staffing costs and upgrade CTS facilities to create a safe environment for clients and staff. This can be achieved by aligning provincial regulations to Health Canada's requirements for the design and implementation of supervised inhalation services under the existing Federal exemption process.

To this end, the Boards of Fourcast and Peterborough Public Health are writing to request your support in reducing barriers to supervised inhalation in Ontario. We look forward to working with you to advance this critical public health objective.

Sincerely,

***Original signed by***

Councillor Kathryn Wilson  
Acting Chair, Board of Health  
Peterborough Public Health

***Original signed by***

Elaine Akers  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Fourcast

cc: Dr. Thomas Piggott, Medical Officer of Health & CEO, Peterborough Public Health  
Donna Rogers, Executive Director, Fourcast  
Local Councils  
Peterborough Drug Strategy  
Dave Smith, MPP, Peterborough Kawartha  
Laurie Scott, MPP, Haliburton – Kawartha Lakes – Brock  
Hon. Dave Piccini, MPP, Northumberland - Peterborough South  
Michelle Ferreri, MP, Peterborough – Kawartha  
Jamie Schmale, MP, Haliburton – Kawartha Lakes – Brock  
Philip Lawrence, MP, Northumberland – Peterborough South  
Health Canada Exemptions Branch