

November 1, 2023

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

**Re: Supervised Inhalation Services in Peterborough**

Dear Honourable Ministers:

In November 2022, the Boards of Four Counties Addiction Services Team (Fourcast) and Peterborough Public Health (PPH) wrote to you requesting support in reducing barriers to supervised inhalation in Ontario. To date, this letter has not received a response.

The preference for using drugs by inhalation rather than injection continues to be a trend in our community and across Ontario. Local data indicates that the number of syringes/needles being distributed and collected through the Needle Exchange Program is decreasing, while the number of foils, pipes, and stems distributed continue to increase.

In July 2023, PPH partnered with Peterborough's Consumption and Treatment Services site (CTS) to survey service users to further understand the need for inhalation services locally among people who use drugs. Of the 62 survey participants, 96% said they would use a safe space like the Consumption and Treatment Services site to smoke drugs if it was available. The majority (58%) noted that they would use this service over 4 times per day. When asked to select preferred methods of consuming drugs, inhalation was chosen 57% of the time, while injection was selected only 15.7% of the time.

Peterborough's CTS has been open since June 2022 and it has become clear that there is a preference for using drugs by inhalation rather than injection. There will be a continued population preferring inhalational drug use that cannot be serviced at the CTS due to the current funding model under Ontario's provincially funded Consumption and Treatment Services program. What was clear in November 2022 continues a year later. There is a significant gap in the services available for people who use drugs and tailored services to address inhalation drug use locally and provincially are needed.

Despite evidence pointing towards increasing changes in the method of consumption of substances, of the 37 safe consumption sites in Canada with exemptions from Health Canada under section 56.1 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA), only two are authorized to offer supervised inhalation. These are 'Casey House Day Health Program Supervised Consumption Services' in Toronto

(not provincially funded as a CTS) and 'Prairie Harm Reduction' located in inner-city Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Our provincial representative, MPP Dave Smith, has been supportive of expanding the provincial CTS program to permit supervised inhalation. We are grateful for this support and the recognition that there is a need to build trust with people who use drugs, no matter their preferred route of drug consumption through inclusive, accessible, and effective service models. It has long been said that the drug poisoning crisis is rooted in the structural determinants of health, including racism, colonialism and trauma, and will only be addressed through a systems-level response that includes services and programs designed to reduce and prevent health and social harm. This includes supervised consumption, safe supply, naloxone distribution, opioid agonist therapy, detox and treatment, etc.

Collectively, our Boards are writing to again request your support for access to supervised inhalation services at CTS' in Ontario. By aligning the provincial regulations to Health Canada's requirements for the design and implementation of supervised inhalation services under the existing Federal exemption process, barriers will be reduced and a safe environment for all methods of consumption will be provided to people who use drugs.

We look forward to working with you to advance this critical public health objective.

Sincerely,

***Original signed by***

Councillor Kathryn Wilson  
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