

From: Rohan Mohindra <rohanm@moyohcs.ca>
Sent: June 26, 2022 10:43 PM
To: ZZG-COUNCIL <zzg-council@peelregion.ca>
Subject: Letters of Support

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Good Evening,

Please find the attached letter(s) of support on behalf of the Peel Drug Users Advisory Panel and Peel Drug Users Network. The letters are in support of the Report to the Council on Supervised Consumption Services, being presented at the Regional Council Meeting on July 7th, 2022.

Thanks.,



Rohan Mohindra (he/him)

Harm Reduction Community Development Coordinator
Moyo Health and Community Services
7700 Hurontario Street #601
Brampton, ON L6Y 4M3
Serving Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon
289-325-4642
www.moyohcs.ca

The Moyo HCS office is located on the territories of the Anishnabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Ojibway, and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the past and present contributions of Métis, Inuit and First Nations peoples that continue to have a hand in shaping and strengthening these communities in our province and country as a whole.

REFERRAL TO _____
RECOMMENDED _____
DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED ☒ _____

The Peel Drug Users Advisory Panel (PDAP) is writing in support of the findings of the Supervised Consumption & Treatment Services Needs and Feasibility Study which was led by Peel Public Health in collaboration with Moyo Health and Community Services and the Canadian Mental Health Association. The study indicates a need for Supervised Consumption & Treatment Services (SCTS) in the Region of Peel. PDAP was created in 2018 to elevate the voice of substance users in influencing programs, services, and policies relevant to substance use in Peel. PDAP is Peel's first substance use-lived experience expert panel. We represent the diverse communities of substance users in Peel at important strategy tables, including the Peel Integrated Drug Strategy and the Opioid Strategy.

The panel also provides consultation and trainings to service providers from a lived experience and harm reduction perspective. We have personally witnessed the devastating impacts of overdose in our community. Many individuals do not call 911 in an overdose situation out of fear of police involvement and the stigma we experience in emergency room settings. The trauma of being on the front line as first responders continues to plague our community, especially for those of us who find ourselves intervening without the tools and resources needed to reach our community members in need of regular access to Supervised Consumption & Treatment Services and this creates extreme risk for individuals using substances in isolation out of fear of being outed or who are disconnected from social networks of people who use drugs.

We, the Peel Drug Users Advisory have collectively lost more friends, family, and community members in the past seven years than any one group in history ever has or should. Our community has been desecrated and our lives forever changed because of the immense loss we continue to experience. As a group we mourn our colleagues, friends and loved ones and as individuals we are stricken with the grief and trauma of watching our community die. We experience these losses sometimes daily, all the while understanding any one of us could be next. During the pandemic we've seen the rates of fatal drug poisonings increase with no signs that individuals and families impacted by these deaths will get relief unless our Region equips itself with the services and supports that are a part of the tools required to protect our lives in the face of our public health crisis, the drug poisonings.

The evidence for the effectiveness of Supervised Consumption & Treatment Services is compelling, its methods part of the Public Health response drug strategies across the Country have implemented with success. We believe that they are key in the response to the harms of a poisoned drug supply and in providing care to people who use drugs in our Region. Supervised Consumption & Treatment Services meet people where they are at in their substance use without judgement or a condition of abstinence. They provide people who use drugs a space where they can go to use their drugs and receive the necessary care to survive to see another day. They provide access to an environment where drug use isn't stigmatized and as a result the work to rebuild relationships with services and service providers can begin. Supervised Consumption Services are a highly effective life saving response, its supports aim to keep people alive so that if/ when they are ready to receive support beyond supervised use, they are alive to do so.

The presence of Supervised Consumption and Treatment Services in Peel is long overdue and had this work been undertaken earlier we could have saved the lives of hundreds of our loved ones. A Supervised Consumption and Treatment Services would have reduced the trauma faced by those of us whom have consistently lost people we love, saved us the trauma of almost dying multiple times ourselves and saved the burnt-out task force whose job places them on the front line along side us from

watching us die in your streets, our community has been abandoned in this crisis without the resources needed to keep people alive. The workers who; counsel and care for us in our PTSD because all our friends are dead and put us on waitlists that are slow moving all the while knowing how real the threat of us dying on those lists are just as exhausted and traumatized as us and they need the region to step up and act now. We cannot put this off for any longer, the time to act has come and gone, we ask that you stand for our community, doing the responsible thing that other Regions across this Province have already done and implement this life saving service as soon as possible. We do not want to see more lives lost in the absence of the support and care we deserve. People who use drugs want to live. We urge you to listen to our pleas and to the recommendations of the study and support the opening of a Supervised Consumption and Treatment Service in the Region of Peel as soon as possible, waiting will cost us more lives.

Sincerely,

Members of the Peel Drug Users Advisory Panel