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REGION OF PEEL
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TO: The Regional Chair and members of Regional Council

RE: Supervised Consumption Site

DATE: July 4, 2022

The Peel Alliance to End Homelessness (PAEH), a collaborative of agencies from across the Region of Peel working together to end homelessness in our communities, is providing this letter of support of the findings of the Supervised Consumption and Treatment Services Needs and Feasibility Study.

The study, led by Peel Public Health in collaboration with Moyo Health and Community Services and the Canadian Mental Health Association, indicates a need for Supervised Consumption and Treatment Services in the Region of Peel, which the PAEH fully endorses.

Homelessness and drug use often overlap and the harms of substance use are exacerbated by homelessness. Of the participants cited in the Peel Integrated Drug Strategy (PIDS Report 2021) group survey, one in five survey participants did not have stable housing or were currently homeless. There is considerable evidence for the effectiveness of harm reduction and if you house people who experience chronic homelessness and who have complex problems, their addictions issues often decline (Canadian Observatory of Homelessness).

A recent study in Calgary on the cost analysis on a safe consumption site showed the proportion of clients who had overdosed decreased steadily for the duration of the program. The number of overdoses managed on site at the SCS trended upward to 98%. Each overdose managed at the SCS produced approximately \$1600 CAD in cost savings from the use of emergency services, with a savings of over \$2.3 million for the lifetime of the program. The study concluded that overdose management at an SCS creates cost savings by offsetting costs required for managing overdoses using emergency department and pre-hospital ambulance services. ([Harm Reduction Journal – March 2022](#))

Additionally, a supervised consumption site also provides other health services, such as referrals for housing or drug treatment programs. There may be economic and social benefits from clients receiving such additional services, which they may have difficulty accessing elsewhere.

The root causes for harms related to substance use are largely derived from systemic structures such as restrictive laws and policies, institutional biases, inequities and discrimination. The fact that opioid related deaths rose in Peel 133% between 2017 and 2021 (651 deaths), and that in 2021, 51% of deaths occurred when there was not one present who could intervene, is a clear indication that a supervised consumption site in Peel is long overdue, as is the decriminalization of drug use.

REFERRAL TO _____
RECOMMENDED _____
DIRECTION REQUIRED _____
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED _____

To quote from Peel Drug User’s Advisory Panel, “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.”

We thank Moyo Health and Community Services and the Canadian Mental Health Association and all those involved in this important work for the case of a safe consumption site in Peel. We also thank the Region for its support for the homelessness-serving sector. We look forward to our continued work and collaboration.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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