



**PARKDALE
QUEEN WEST**
Community
Health Centre

www.pqwchc.org

Statement on the Government’s Decision to End Funding for Life-Saving Consumption Treatment and Supervised Consumption Sites (CTS/SCS)

We must express our disappointment and dismay over the Government’s decision to end funding for Consumption Treatment Services/Supervised Consumption Services (CTS/SCS) across Ontario.

These sites have stood as beacons of evidence-based health care, serving thousands of people across our community and the province. These sites have prevented fatal overdoses, reduced the spread of HIV and hepatitis and more importantly, they meet people where they are with dignity and respect. Daily, these services have proven effective in connecting people who use drugs with essential medical care, stability and support, including pathways to mental health and treatment programs.

This decision comes at a devastating time. We are in the midst of an ongoing drug toxicity spike that has claimed too many of our neighbours, friends and family members. Toronto Paramedic Services has reported an increase in fatal and non-fatal suspected opioid overdose calls in recent months.

Public health units across the province, including Toronto Public Health, Grand Erie Public Health, Region of Waterloo Public Health, Public Health Sudbury, Grey Bruce Public Health, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health and Windsor-Essex Health Unit have reported increases in drug toxicity and overdose this winter, during a season that is already challenging for those living on the margins. These trends are echoed in the recent numbers from the Chief Coroner’s Office that indicate an uptick in opioid toxicity deaths in Ontario. Eliminating these life-saving services will place additional and undue burden on emergency medical services and put countless lives at risk.

We were faced with the same provincial decision to defund life saving service last November, to devastating consequence, as the month after closing, two former clients of the CTS/SCS died of suspected opioid overdose. We believe those deaths were preventable. Our CTS/SCS partners now facing closure are carrying this same fear and weight of losing clients because of these cuts to life-saving services. We stand in solidarity with them. We will continue to fiercely advocate for the Ontario government reconsider their decision to cut funding, as well as commit to expanding the full spectrum of evidence-based substance use care and supports that people who use drugs want and need.

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