



December 6, 2019

Province of British Columbia
premier@gov.bc.ca

RE: Provincial Opioid Crisis

Dear Premier Horgan,

On behalf of council, I would like to reiterate our unanimous support for the letter received from the City of Victoria in regard to the provincial opioid crisis. Many people believe this is a "city" issue; it is not, the opioid crisis reaches all communities in our province.

Rural communities are often on their own to determine how to deal with the crisis due to the lack of local knowledge and supports. At the November 26 Regular Meeting, council unanimously passed a resolution to support the City of Victoria's resolutions that did not make it to the floor at UBCM due to time constraints. The city of Victoria's resolutions are as follows:

Safer Drug Supply to Save Lives

Whereas It has been two years since BC declared a public health emergency due to increased overdoses, yet the death toll for those consuming substances continues to rise due to an unpredictable and highly-toxic drug supply;

And whereas people with opioid use disorder, a chronic relapsing medical condition, are at high risk of overdose-related harms including death and an estimated 42,200 people inject toxic substances in British Columbia, it is not possible for the treatment system to rapidly increase services fast enough to manage this number of people as "patients" within a medical treatment model given the many challenges in achieving and retaining the people on opioid use disorder treatment, people at risk of overdose in British Columbia do not have access to a safer alternative to the unpredictable, highly-toxic drug supply;

Therefore be it resolved that in an effort to save lives and reduce harm due to an unpredictable and highly-toxic drug supply, and as part of a holistic response to the public health emergency, including prevention, treatment, and recovery, that the Province of British Columbia work with local communities, Health Authorities across the Province, the Ministry of Mental

Health and Addictions, and the Ministry of Health ensures that people at risk of overdose harm have access to safer alternatives.

(B172) Observed Inhalation Sites for Overdose Prevention

Whereas British Columbia is currently experiencing an unprecedented public health emergency due to an unpredictable and highly-toxic drug supply, and smoking or inhalation is the second most common mode of consumption among all people who have died from a suspected illicit drug overdose and the most common mode of consumption among men and those between the ages of 15 and 29;

And whereas observed consumption services (i.e. supervised consumption services and overdose prevention services) are evidence-based harm reduction approaches shown to reduce overdose- related harm, and there is not adequate access to observed consumption services that provide space for inhalation where communities are facing crisis;

Therefore be it resolved that to ensure that people at risk of overdose across BC have access to observed consumption services that provide space for inhalation, that the Province of British Columbia fund and work through local communities, Health Authorities across the Province, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the Ministry of Health to provide these services as part of a holistic response to the public health emergency, including prevention, treatment, and recovery.

The opioid crisis is a provincial issue, and it will take efforts on a provincial level to lessen the health emergency that reaches every corner of our province.

We look forward to receiving information on provincial initiatives addressing the opioid crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dolores Funk', with a stylized circular flourish.

Dolores Funk, Mayor

cc: Honourable Adrian Dix at HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca
mayor@victoria.ca