

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Suite A5
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2



Dear Councillor Wong-Tam,

As a healthcare organization situated in the mid-east Toronto neighbourhood, Sherbourne Health Centre is strongly committed to meeting the complex health and social needs of the clients we serve.

We are writing to you in view of the Board of Health's unanimous July 4th approval to implement three supervised injection services in downtown Toronto, subject to Council approval. Our purpose herewith is to ask for your support of this critical, life-saving health service, with its proposal to be presented before City Council during the upcoming week of July 11th, 2016.

Drug overdose is a growing public health crisis within our city. As a healthcare provider that cares for client populations that use drugs, we see firsthand the harsh impact of IV drug use. More can and must be done to address this epidemic. We strongly believe that supervised injection services are an important and effective response to help mitigate the dangerous risks associated with IV drug use, including communicable disease transmission, overdose and death.

Evidence shows that the establishment of supervised injection sites within existing health facilities, while managed by competent health professionals, brings an unprecedented number of benefits. Key advantages include helping to reduce the spread communicable diseases like HIV and hepatitis, improving public safety by reducing the number of precariously discarded needles, and most crucially, decreasing the number of preventable drug overdoses and fatalities. It is further noted that safe injection sites do not contribute to an increase in drug use, and in fact, provide an opportunity for users to be connected to additional health and social support services within the community.

We are committed to advancing health and equitable access to comprehensive care for underserved communities, and fully support the establishment of medical services that save peoples' lives. We therefore implore you to vote in favour of the proposal to implement supervised injection services at Toronto Public Health (The Works), Queen West-Central Toronto Community Health Centre and South Riverdale Community Health Centre, as this is a sensible and effective intervention that helps preserve life.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Marshall'.

Chantel Marshall, RN, BScN, MHSc, CHE
Program Director Urban Health Programs / Nursing Practice Lead
Sherbourne Health Centre