

June 15, 2016

Councillor Joe Mihevc  
 Chair, Board of Health  
 City of Toronto

*Re: Letter of support for South Riverdale Community Health Centre*

Dear Councillor Mihevc,

My name is Dr. Jeff Powis and I am pleased to support South Riverdale Community Health Centre's (SRCHC) proposal to expand its harm reduction services to include supervised injection.

I have worked closely with SRCHC for over 10 years as an Infectious Disease Consultant where I co-founded and continue to support a Hepatitis C treatment and support program for people who use illicit drugs. In my capacity with this program, I have worked closely with potential service users of the proposed supervised injection service and feel strongly that harm reduction is an integral part of the response to substance use. Not only is it an essential prevention strategy for blood-borne infectious diseases like HIV and Hepatitis C, it will provide an important additional access point to health and other social services for our City's most marginalized.

I also believe that SRCHC has the capacity to implement this type of harm reduction service in an effective and safe way. SRCHC has a long and successful history of providing integrated health services within a harm reduction framework to people who use drugs. SRCHC's Hepatitis C treatment program, which does not require abstinence as a condition of service, has been transformational for many of its clients, who come to address Hep C and leave having improved their health and well-being in other additional areas. A supervised injection service offers this same opportunity, while also improving community safety more broadly by reducing disease transmission.

I would urge the Board of Health to recommend this important health service.



Dr. Jeff Powis  
 Medical Director of Research and Infectious Diseases Consultatnt  
 Toronto Community Hepatitis C Program

Director, Antimicrobial Stewardship Program  
 Michael Garron Hospital, Toronto East Health Network

Cc Lynne Raskin, CEO, South Riverdale Community Health Centre  
 Councillor Paula Fletcher, Ward 30