



June 29, 2016

Councillor Joe Mihevc
Chair, Board of Health
City of Toronto

Re: Letter of support for The Works

Dear Councillor Mihevc,

I am a family physician at St. Michael's Hospital and the Chair of the organization Health Providers Against Poverty (HPAP). HPAP is pleased to support The Work's proposal to expand its harm reduction services to include supervised injection.

Health Providers Against Poverty is an alliance of several hundred health care providers—including doctors, nurses, midwives, occupational therapists, and dentists—who recognize that poverty is the one of the most significant risk factors for poor health. Through advocacy, education, and patient care, we are working to eliminate poverty and reduce health inequities in Canada.

Toronto needs safe injection sites. There is high demand for harm reduction services. In 2015, there were over 100,000 client visits to harm reduction services, and almost 1.9 million needles were distributed along with other sterile injection supplies through community agencies across the city. Overdoses in Toronto are on the rise. In 2013, there were 206 people died from drug overdoses in Toronto, the highest annual number to date.¹

Safe injection sites have been proven to reduce the number of overdose deaths, reduce transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C, connect marginalized community members to health care and other social service, and reduce public drug use.²

We at HPAP urge the Board of Health to recommend this important health service for Toronto.

Sincerely,

Dr. Samantha Green
Chair, Health Providers Against Poverty
Family Physician, St. Michael's Hospital
Lecturer, University of Toronto

Cc Shaun Hopkins, Manager, The Works, Toronto Public Health

¹ Challacombe, L. et al. (2013) Toronto I-Track Report. Enhanced Surveillance of Risk Behaviours and Prevalence of HIV and Hepatitis C Among People Who Inject Drugs. University of Toronto. Toronto: ON.

² Bayoumi, A., Strike, C. et al. (2012). Report of the Toronto and Ottawa Supervised Consumption Assessment Study. Toronto: ON.