

Board of Health - Comments for 2013.HL23.1 on July 10, 2013 Board of Health

From: Joan Anderson <janderson@pwatoronto.org>
To: "boh@toronto.ca" <boh@toronto.ca>
Date: 7/9/2013 5:01 PM
Subject: Comments for 2013.HL23.1 on July 10, 2013 Board of Health
CC: "Keith Hambly (khambly@fifehouse.org)" <khambly@fifehouse.org>

HL23.1.4

To the City Clerk:

Please add our comments to the agenda for the July 10, 2013 Board of Health meeting on item 2013.HL23.1, Supervised Injection Services in Toronto

We understand that our comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that our names will be listed as correspondents on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Many thanks for your assistance.

Comments:

July 9, 2013

To: Councillor Joe Mihevc, Chair, Board of Health and members of the Board of Health

From: Keith Hambly, Co-Chair, and Joan Anderson, Project Manager, Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN)

Re: Board of Health Meeting July 10, 2013
Item HL23.1

Supervised Injection Services in Toronto

The Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN) supports the principle and practice of harm reduction. We acknowledge Toronto Public Health's long-term support for harm reduction and the adoption of harm reduction as an essential component of the Toronto Drug Strategy approved by the Board of Health and Toronto City Council (2005) that provided a "comprehensive approach to alcohol and other drug issues based on the integrated components of prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement."

Harm reduction recognizes drug use as a health issue, and provides supportive, non-judgmental services and harm reduction education and supplies to reduce the harms related to drug use. Connections to services and service providers, including peers, are made that can connect drug users to health care, housing and community support that changes lives. Harm reduction has long been a proven and important approach in the care of individuals dealing with drug problems and for the health of the broader community including prevention of Hep C and HV.

Next Steps: A Supervised Injection Service "is a health service that provides a safe and hygienic

environment where people can inject pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of trained staff.” (Supervised Injection Services Toolkit, Toronto Drug Strategy, June 2013). As such, Supervised Injection Services are consistent with harm reduction. THN welcomes the statement and commitment from Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health for Toronto, that “Toronto Public Health (TPH) supports this model and approach to expand the continuum of health services available for this at-risk population.” We further welcome the work of the Toronto Drug Strategy’s Supervised Injection Services Working Group and its Supervised Injection Services Toolkit”. The Toolkit outlines the need for a comprehensive communications strategy as a key part of the groundwork needed to educate, consult, plan, develop, implement services and evaluate. Plans for Toronto need to be specific to Toronto but there is valuable information obtained from services in Vancouver and internationally to create services here.

The support of the Board of Health is important for the next steps and the necessary work of community engagement for this health service to become a reality in Toronto.

Thank you.

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