



The Toronto Board of Health
Secretariat Contact: Nancy Martins
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

March 17, 2016

Dear Ms. Martins,

It is the position of Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre (DPNCHC) that supervised injection services (SIS) are a vital resource for intravenous drug users, and that the three proposed SIS's in Toronto would be greatly beneficial to the health of this group and to the health of their surrounding communities.

More than 200 individuals die annually in Toronto as a result of drug overdoses. By providing drug users with access to clean equipment, supervision by medical professionals, and education on safe injection practices and available resources, the proposed facilities at The Works, Queen West-Central Toronto Community Health Centre, and South Riverdale Community Health Centre would reduce the risk of fatal drug overdoses and the transmission of infectious blood-borne diseases like HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. Such services have proven to be highly effective in Vancouver and in close to 100 locations across Europe.

In addition to mitigating the immediate risks of intravenous drug use, SIS's also offer the potential for improved long term health outcomes. The proposed SIS facilities are fully integrated into their sites' existing programming and healthcare services, providing an easy point of entry for a population with weak connections to the health care system. Users of the SIS's would benefit greatly from primary care services to treat diseases and infections, as well as the choice to access addiction counseling and treatment. Community Health Centres have a strong commitment to health equity and inter-professional care, and so DPNCHC is pleased to see that two of the chosen SIS locations are to be based within CHC's.

It is our belief that all people should have access to the best available preventive health services. DPNCHC fully supports the three proposed SIS facilities in Toronto, and hopes that their establishment sets a precedent for integrated SIS services across the country.

Sincerely,

Kim Fraser
Executive Director