

## City Council

### Notice of Motion

MM31.8	ACTION			Ward:All
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### **Financial Assistance for Patients with Diabetes - by Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, seconded by Councillor Christin Carmichael Greb**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Board of Health. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

### **Recommendations**

Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, seconded by Councillor Christin Carmichael Greb, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Medical Officer of Health to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Health in designing an equitable approach on the financial assistance of providing syringes and needles for the treatment of drug users at Supervised Injection Sites and patients with type 1 diabetes.
2. City Council request the Medical Officer of Health to bring forward a report to the next meeting of the Board of Health on September 25, 2017.

### **Summary**

Type 1 diabetes is a condition whereby the human body does not produce insulin. It is a condition that can develop as early as adolescence. Type 1 diabetes is rarer than its type 2 counterpart of metabolic diseases, in which a person has high blood glucose (blood sugar). Patients with type 1 diabetes must diligently adhere to healthy eating, regular exercise, and take insulin, through which complications can be controlled or abated. Patients will also need to take insulin injections for the rest of their life. Adequate blood-glucose levels must be monitored and maintained through blood tests.

In Ontario, there is no coverage of insulin syringes or needles through the Ontario Health Insurance Program. The Ontario Drug Benefit also does not cover pen needles, syringes or lancets.

If a person is a senior (65+ years) who needs insulin and lives at home, the Assistive Devices Program can provide \$170 annually to help pay for syringes and needles. A recipient of Ontario Disability Support Program can apply for diabetic supplies, including syringes, needles, blood glucose monitors and insulin pump supplies. Ontario Works may also cover the costs of diabetic supplies (with a valid prescription and no other coverage).

Conversely, the provision of syringes and needles through supervised injection sites (also known as "safe injection sites") is less restrictive than the provision of such supplies for patients with type 1 diabetes. The Government of Canada grants exemptions under Section 56.1 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, which allow such sites to operate in Canada.

Clients of the injection sites arrive with pre-obtained drugs, then given sterile injecting supplies and instructions of safe practices. A nurse supervises the activity, then monitors the client for adverse reactions. The Government of Ontario announced an investment of \$3.5 million, following approval by Health Canada, to install and operate three supervised injection sites in Toronto (South Riverdale Community Health Centre on Queen Street East and Carlaw Avenue; Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre at Queen Street West and Bathurst Street; and Works at Toronto Public Health near Yonge-Dundas Square).

While expanding efforts on harm reduction programs will help combat the opioid and fentanyl crisis, the provision of sterile injection supplies presents an inequitable approach for other vital, health-related treatments like insulin injection. Therefore, this Motion will direct the appropriate staff to investigate the financial costs of providing supplies for both clients of injection sites and patients with type 1 diabetes, and request the Government of Ontario to design a balanced and equitable approach.

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM31.8