

November 26, 2021



**PARKDALE
QUEEN WEST**
Community
Health Centre

www.pqwchc.org

Board of Health
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

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Meeting No. 32 - Agenda Item on Decriminalization

To the Members of the Board of Health:

Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre strongly supports the need to end the war on drugs and supports decriminalization. Daily through our harm reduction programs, supervised consumption services, primary care and safer opioid supply programs witness and respond to the tragic and preventable impacts of criminalization.

We know that decriminalization is a necessary component of ending stigma and discrimination and we also see the disproportionate harms that criminalization has on black and Indigenous communities; as such we see decriminalization as necessary to address systemic racism and colonization. Hence, while outside the scope of authority of the Board of Health, we strongly believe that the Board must be in alliance with the calls for expungement of records for those who were impacted by criminalization for simple possession as the harms of those records continues to reverberate for many community members.

We support a vision of decriminalization that is built on the needs and voices of people who use drugs, and that simultaneously attempts to address the need for a regulated and safer supply of drugs to support the end of the overdose crisis. We look forward to seeing the full details of the Toronto plan; and a commitment that people who use drugs are central to policy making, implementation and evaluation of a Decriminalization Strategy, thus ensuring that our implementation efforts do not create additional or unintended harms to the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angela Robertson".

Angela Robertson
Executive Director