

Whanny Mymuller Deputation City Budget Committee

January 17, 2023

I am addressing the city budget committee today to push for action on harm reduction.

My name is Whanny Mymuller. I work at the The Corner Drop In and have joined the Member Advocacy Committee at The Neighbourhood Group. I am not speaking on behalf of the agency. I have experience with the issues of harm reduction and especially overdose prevention. Tragically, I know a number of people who have died from preventable overdoses. These deaths could likely have been prevented if there was more access to overdose prevention services.

Right now there is an urgent need to expand the hours at the existing overdose prevention sites. These sites need city funding.

My friend passed away on a Saturday when the OPS at The Neighbourhood Group site in Kensington Market was closed. I want to stress that this site only runs because TNG receives donations. Had it not been for lack of funding, red tape and bureaucracy no telling how many further lives we could have saved. With that said I would like to mention that since the opening of our Kensington Market overdose prevention site they have accumulated over 500 clients and zero overdose fatalities.

We must find some city funding to extend this OPS site to have extended hours and on weekends.

I just learned there will be a mobile van to do overdose prevention. This service needs strong funding support from the city.

We started off with tents and a trailer in Moss Park. This was helpful for people needing safe drug use sites. We need to fund staff and do more of this work. These are grassroots approaches that must be re-examined.

Recent historical events have showed us that we can overcome and help each other when we strive together. I hope these successful organizing strategies can be better applied to tackle the overdose crisis. Please let's reach further.

Thank you.