

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM22.9	ACTION			Ward: All
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Protecting Community Health by Advocating for Supervised Consumption Services and Consumption and Treatment Services Sites - by Councillor Chris Moise, seconded by Councillor Alejandra Bravo

** 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 Chris Moise, seconded by Councillor Alejandra Bravo, recommends that:

1. City Council urge the Government of Ontario to protect community health, well-being and safety by continuing to fund all currently operating Supervised Consumption Services and Consumption and Treatment Services Sites beyond March 31, 2025.
2. City Council request the Government of Ontario to permit the co-location of Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hubs and Supervised Consumption Services and Consumption and Treatment Services sites to provide for live-saving medical services, primary care, and increased pathways to treatment services.

Summary

Proposed Changes by the Government of Ontario to Supervised Consumption and Consumption and Treatment Services Sites in Toronto

On August 20, 2024, the Ontario government announced changes to supervised consumption and harm reduction services in Ontario. These changes will result in the closure of five supervised consumption sites and consumption and treatment services in Toronto by March 31, 2025, including the supervised consumption sites at The Works, which is operated by Toronto Public Health and currently located at 277 Victoria Street.

While the province also announced a \$378 million investment for 19 new Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment Hubs across Ontario, these hubs will not be permitted to offer safer supply, supervised consumption or needle exchange programs. These changes can be expected to have a detrimental impact on the health and well-being of all Torontonians, including:

- Increased deaths from overdose – Last year alone, Toronto Public Health’s supervised consumption services supported over 19,000 client visits and responded to approximately 500 overdoses.

- Fewer pathways to treatment – While increased investment in treatment are welcome, the closure of supervised consumption sites will eliminate a key “front door” for people who use drugs to access treatment services.
- Decreased community safety and well-being – supervised consumption site services, including needle-exchange are vital to ensuring the safety and well-being of the broader public, as well as people who use drugs. The recently announced changes can be expected to increase public use of drugs.
- Increased strain on first responders and hospital emergency departments – supervised consumption sites provide a controlled setting where highly trained staff provide emergency first aid in the event of an overdose. The closure of these essential medical services will increase the pressures on hospital emergency departments and already over-burdened first responders, including paramedics and law enforcement.

In light of these concerns, it is critical that the Government of Ontario continue to fund and support supervised consumption sites/consumption and treatment services as a key pillar in the response to the drug toxicity crisis, alongside prevention, treatment, and community safety and well-being.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM22.9

(<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2024/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-249157.pdf>)