

URGENT

Waterloo Region Drug Action Team,
Kitchener, Ontario
wrdrugactionteam at gmail.com



Re: *Community Care And Recovery Act* - Consumption and Treatment Services

April 11, 2025

To: Jess Dixon, MPP
Hon. Mike Harris Jr., MPP
Brian Riddell, MPP
Aislinn Clancy, MPP
Catherine Fife, MPP

Dear Members of Provincial Parliament,

Twelve days ago the Waterloo Region Drug Action Team sent an urgent letter to the recipients here, and no reply has been received from the PC members, Ministers, or the Attorney General. It is not possible to overstate how urgent that letter was, and remains.

A local applicant in the Charter case has expressed concern that if the Kitchener Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) site closes, there is a “strong likelihood of me overdosing and dying”. Justice Callaghan noted when issuing the injunction that “the closing of SCSs will cause significant harm across the province, including the loss of life”. The Kitchener CTS site, like other CTS sites thought to be eligible for injunctive relief, closed April 1. Other popular consumption sites (e.g. Urgent Public Health Needs Sites - UPHNS) have closed, despite their success, due to s.3 prohibitions and the absence of injunctive relief provided during the court’s consideration of the Charter issues.

But not for the *Community Care and Recovery Act* (CCRA), the local applicant and other CTS clients would be much less likely to die, among other harms. Constituents and organizations across Waterloo region await a swift and substantive response on our letter dated March 30.

On April 8, additional concerns and questions arose during the Region of Waterloo’s Community Health Services meeting. At that meeting a motion was debated which, if passed by Committee, would result in two formal requests:

1. Regional Council formally requests that the Province of Ontario provide immediate funding and support to ensure continued operation of the Kitchener CTS site during the injunction period, in compliance with the court’s decision.

2. Regional Council further requests that the Province grant approval under Section 3 of the *Community Care and Recovery Act* (CCRA) to allow the Regional Municipality of Waterloo to support and maintain CTS operations beyond the injunction period if necessary.

During the meeting discussion, many Councillors spoke openly about provoking provincial retribution, including but not necessarily limited to withdrawal of HART hub funding granted to two

local charities - House of Friendship and Health Caring KW - if the Region were to write the request letter. All delegates at the meeting supported the motion. The local HART hub partnership has never been involved in CTS-related operations.

A second concern arising was the legality of sending a letter to the province given the prohibitions contained in s.3 of the CCRA. It is unclear if writing to the province as per the motion is permitted. It is unclear if the Minister of Health - the approval authority - would ever grant a single approval allowed by the CCRA given the Minister's clear statements on consumption services to media. It is doubtful compliance with the injunction to re-establish a consumption service in Waterloo region is possible without provincial permission to provide some municipal support.

There is tremendous fear that the province is hostile and vindictive, and will retaliate if the Region writes a letter as per the motion. Can you please clarify and confirm, with haste:

1. That there will be no hardship(s) imposed by the province on the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, area municipalities, and/or non-governmental organization generally, and specifically, withdrawal of HART hub funding, should the Region request approval from the province for supporting consumption services as described in the motion?
2. That it is permissible for a municipality to write to the province about consumption services, and make requests like those contained in the motion?

As you are aware, there is no visible support for eliminating consumption services locally. Our beloved - and now closed - CTS site was highly valued by staff and parents of the neighbouring daycare facility, by the church leadership across the street, by nearby business owners, members of both neighbouring schools, the Downtown Advisory Committee, many residents of the neighbourhood, and the councils of both the City of Kitchener and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo by formal Council motions, to name but a few. The health and safety of children, youth, and adults is best served by the CTS, as local affidavits attest, right where it was.

The Waterloo Region Drug Action Team and the community at large thank you in advance for your consideration of this pressing matter and your prompt response to the 2 questions contained within this letter, and the questions and concerns raised in our letter sent March 30.

Sincerely,

Waterloo Region Drug Action Team
Unfunded - Volunteer - Non-partisan - Honest
www.drugactionteam.ca

Cc: Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health
Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General
Karen Redman, Regional Chair
Mayor Berry Vrbanovic
Carlo Di Carlo, Partner, Stockwoods LLP