



HEALTH OFFICERS COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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November 5, 2008

**To: Health Authority Chairs and CEOs
Honourable George Abbott, Minister of Health Services
Honourable Mary Polak, Minister of Healthy Living and Sport**

Re: Supervised Injection Services

This letter is to request that health authorities develop supervised injection services where there is a need, as integrated with and as part of a continuum of health services to deal with problems related to psychoactive substances. Please see the enclosed resolution from the Health Officers Council in this regard.

Health Officers Council is of the opinion that supervised injection services have been studied enough as research projects, and that it is time to move them into the mainstream of health service provision. A variety of approaches will be needed in different communities to connect people who inject drugs with health service providers, and health authorities should work closely with their communities to establish such services. Providing these services as part of existing health services is clearly in the best interests of people addicted to substances, and in the interests of the community at large.

Your prompt action to establish these services is important in further reducing the harms associated with substances.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Martiquet
Chair, Health Officers Council of BC

Attachment

Resolution October 2008: Supervised Injection Services

Whereas the Supreme Court of BC has ruled that the federal *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* is unconstitutional in prohibiting the possession and trafficking of substances to people who are addicted in the context of the supervised injection service Insite; and

Whereas this court ruling enables the supervised injection service " Insite" to remain open; and

Whereas the provincial government is intervening in the federal appeal of this decision to support the provincial right to deliver health care services; and

Whereas the "Insite" service has been thoroughly evaluated and has been found to be providing valuable health care services with evidence of no adverse consequences; and

Whereas supervised injection services can be operated in a variety of settings based on standard nursing practices without need for federal exemption from the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*;

Therefore be it resolved that Health Officer Council supports inclusion of supervised injection services as an important component of comprehensive health authority prevention, treatment, and recovery substances related services; and

Further be it resolved that HOC recommends that supervised injection services now evolve from a current single research project into being integrated into community primary care settings, addictions services, hospitals and other health care services; and

Further be it resolved that HOC recommends that all BC health authorities work with their community and local and other government partners including police and ambulance services to establish as needed supervised injection services integrated into community primary care settings, addictions services, hospitals and other health care services so that injection drug users can gain ready access to a full range of health care, recovery, and prevention services.