May 25, 2022

John Tory, Mayor

Stephanie Donaldson, Vice-Chair Toronto Board of Health

Re: **The Poisoned Drug Crisis**

Dear City Leaders,

I am deeply disturbed by the recent report from Ontario’s Chief Coroner that 511 Torontonians died from opioid toxicity in 2021. That’s 10 per week, and a shocking 273% increase from 2015!

I recognize that there are many social factors driving this problem that are largely a provincial responsibility. I also realize that control of drugs is a federal matter. I urge you to keep up the pressure on these levels of government to act, including:

* Being an active advocate for the expansion of Supervised Consumption Sites, to ensure access in all neighborhoods where people are dying from poisoned street drugs with 24-hour, 7-day-a-week services;
* Demanding the reinstatement of the provincial Opioid Emergency Task Force and actively participating in the recommendations made by experts, especially people who use drugs and frontline workers; and
* Making rent-geared-to-income, affordable housing an issue for all levels of government to resolve cooperatively and ensuring the development of units is in keeping with the growing, urgent need.

I support the city’s proposal to decriminalize the possession of drugs for personal use. I urge the city to use any savings from enforcement to expand access to low barrier, culturally safe, accessible treatment options for those who use drugs.

I urge you further to adopt a human-rights-based approach to homelessness and encampments in the city, since so many overdose deaths are happening among people experiencing homelessness.

I believe that all levels of government need to work together on this drug poisoning **EMERGENCY**.

Sincerely,

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Address or postal code

cc: My Councillor …………………..