Nov 10, 2022

Right Honorable Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau,

Honorable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Health,

Honorable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions

**Re: The Poisoned Drug Crisis**

Dear Ministers,

It is widely known that most of the illegal drug overdose deaths are due to the contamination of the drug supply. It is also widely understand that substance use is a health issue. However as long as possession of some substances remains illegal, there is fear of police involvement amongst those who find themselves addicted to such substances. As a result, users remain in the shadows where consumption alone can be **fatal**. Long ago, prohibition was shown not to work, only driving activity underground. We need to learn the lessons of history and apply them to today’s problems.

Its not the government’s role to decide what people want, rather to help everyone protect their safety. Substance control and criminal behavior are federal matters. So the federal government should protect all Canadians from poisoned substances in common use, not drive users into the shadows.

So I believe that Canada needs bold action from the federal level including:

1. Re-introducing a government sponsored bill, like C-216, to de-criminalize possession of substances for personal use, nationwide. Such change would bring users out of the shadows so they can get the help they need without fear of the law.
2. Enacting the Expungement of Certain Drug-related Convictions Act to end the stigma imposed by having a criminal record.
3. Enacting the ***National*** Strategy on Substance Use Act to advance a coordinated ***national*** strategy to address substance-related harms, and creating a ***National*** Safe Supply Strategy to:
   * + enable development and wide distribution of pharmaceutical-grade substances ***nationwide.*** The existing Safer Opioid Supply programs are only pilot programs with funding expiring March 31, 2023, and at only 21 sites across Canada. Also the prescribed opioid substitute is woefully inadequate for many people on this program.
     + regulate the trade in now-illicit substances.
     + provide people who use drugs with the low-barrier access, knowledge and information so they can make informed decisions about substances.

Since provincial and municipal government need to cooperate with federal strategies, I copy other elected representatives and ministers.

Sincerely,

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Address or postal code

cc: My Member of Parliament: ---------------

Federal Political Party Health Critics: Stephen Ellis, Laila Goodridge, Don Davies, Gord Johns, Luc Thériault, Jennifer Purdy

House of Commons Health Committee Chair: Sean Casey

Ontario Minister of Health: Sylvia Jones

Toronto Mayor: John Tory

Toronto Board of Health Interim Chair: Joe Mihevc