



November 4, 2021

The Honorable Jean-Yves Duclos  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6  
jean-yves.duclos@parl.gc.ca  
hcminister.ministresc@canada.ca

The Honorable Carolyn Bennett  
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Associate Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6  
carolyn.bennett@parl.gc.ca

The Honorable Christine Elliott,  
Minister of Health, Deputy Premier  
Ministry of Health  
College Park 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3  
christine.elliott@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Duclos, Minister Bennett and Minister Elliott,

**Re: Strong support for the Supervised Consumption Site (SCS) / Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) site applications for the proposed location of 11 Innisfil Street (80 Bradford Street, Unit 940) in Barrie, Ontario**

As leaders in our community, we write to you today with regards to the devastating opioid crisis affecting the City of Barrie, and together, to ask urgently for your approval of a Supervised Consumption Site in Barrie.

In October 2020, the Barrie Health Accord was signed by senior leadership from the following organizations: the City of Barrie, the County of Simcoe, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre and the Barrie Police Service. The Barrie Health Accord is focused on the long-term health and wellbeing of the community, through collaborative efforts, to address the root causes of health disparities that negatively impact the overall health and wellbeing of residents of the municipality.

The signatories of this Accord are very aware that the City of Barrie has been disproportionately impacted by a significant rise in opioid related overdoses and deaths as a result of what is believed to be a poorer quality of substances being sold on the street level, compounded by individuals using more substances in response to stress, and the risk of using alone due to COVID-19 preventative measures. There were 58 opioid deaths in Barrie in 2020, more than double the 26 from 2019, and 85% higher than the average from 2017-2019. The crude opioid mortality rate for Barrie in 2020 was 38 deaths per 100,000 population, which was the third highest among all municipalities in Ontario with populations over 100,000 residents. In 2020, Barrie's crude rate for opioid overdose emergency department visits was 181.2 per 100,000 population, which is more than double the provincial crude rate of 85.0 per 100,000 population.

We are deeply saddened and frustrated by this worsening crisis. We believe that this issue is of the utmost importance for the wellbeing of our residents, and that every effective tool needs to be implemented as soon as possible.

We believe that an SCS/CTS in Barrie at the proposed location of 11 Innisfil St (80 Bradford Street, Unit 940) is the next pressing need in responding to this crisis. It will benefit the City of Barrie and people who use drugs by preventing overdoses, providing enhanced pathways to the available community health, treatment, and social services for individuals in need, reducing drug use in public spaces within the downtown core, reducing the risks of contracting HIV and Hepatitis C through shared needles and equipment, and through harm reduction education and supports for the clients accessing the services of the site.

In addition to strongly supporting the applications for an SCS/CTS in Barrie, our membership recognizes and participates in the regional efforts of the Simcoe Muskoka Opioid Strategy (SMOS) pillar activities with ongoing commitment to:

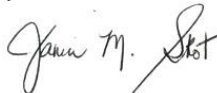
- Raise awareness of the root causes of substance use and addiction through education on neuroscience and toxic stress.
- Support prevention through early mental health intervention, education and awareness.
- Promote anti-stigma messaging and education to address stigma associated with substance use and addiction and the barrier it presents to seeking support.
- Address large-scale distribution of the illicit drug supply through collaborative enforcement measures.
- Increase access to addiction and treatment services within the community.
- Advocate for regional access and expansion of needle exchange and naloxone programs and services.

An SCS/CTS is an effective harm reduction strategy that can help provide a compassionate community response to the severe and urgent opioid crisis in Barrie. In light of this, we ask that you promptly review and approve the SCS/CTS application for Barrie, so that our community can begin to benefit from the services it will provide.

Sincerely,



**City of Barrie**  
Mayor Jeff Lehman



**Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre**  
Janice Skot, Chief Executive Officer



**County of Simcoe**  
Warden George Cornell



**Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit**  
Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer



**Barrie Police Service**  
Chief Kimberley Greenwood

cc: Doug Shipley, MP, Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte  
John Brassard, MP, Barrie–Innisfil  
Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General, MPP, Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte  
Andrea Khanjin, MPP, Barrie–Springwater  
Exemptions (Health Canada)  
Addiction and Substances (Ministry of Health)