



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Simcoe County
Gambling, Substance Use and Mental Health Services

April 30, 2024

Honourable Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health and Deputy Premier
Ministry of Health
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8

Dear Honourable Minister Jones:

Request for decision to establish Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) in Barrie, ON

When we met with Ministry of Health staff in 2022 and 2023, they confirmed that all requirements for the CTS application and operating budget are finalized, and the only outstanding item is the Ministry approval. As you are aware, more than nineteen (19) months have passed since the federal exemption from the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) was granted on September 9, 2022, pursuant to section 56.1 of the CDSA, for CMHA SCB to operate the CTS in Barrie at 11 Innisfil Street, and more than thirty-one (31) months have passed since the application was originally submitted to the provincial and federal governments.

As we await provincial approval, **CMHA SCB has sustained \$122,878.70 in rental expenditures** (current monthly rate is \$3,862.34) since September 1, 2021, to hold the proposed CTS site. As you are aware, following Ministry approval we will face another waiting period to initiate the Capital Project planning process. As each month passes, we are concerned about the fiscal prudence of paying rent for a space the Ministry has yet to approve for its intended purpose.

The property owner/landlord has been supportive of another short-term lease agreement and extension with the hopes that the Ministry of Health would move forward with this critical service. As each month passes, more lives are lost in Barrie and Simcoe County to the opioid crisis. Treating addiction requires a continuum of care, which includes both recovery and harm reduction. Research has found that fatal overdoses declined by 67 per cent within 500 metres of locations offering this kind of harm reduction program.

Not having this essential service is a significant source of frustration for persons who use substances, family members, community members and organizations engaged in this issue. As you are aware,



many of these individuals publicly petitioned with the support of the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition (Open Letter to Minister of Health on March 4th, 2024) regarding the need for this CTS to proceed in Barrie. This request is also in line with the recent recommendations from the Chief Medical Officer of Health to reduce opioid-related harms, which included increasing access to supervised consumption services.

At the 31st month mark with many more months anticipated for the Capital Project planning process, we request that the Ministry of Health respond to our time sensitive request to make a critical decision for our community at your earliest convenience, to ensure we fulfill our fiduciary responsibilities as governors. We trust you appreciate the alarming mortality and morbidity related to the opioid crisis and **we require a response on the funding decision for the 2021 CMHA Simcoe County Branch CTS application by Friday, June 17, 2024.**

Yours sincerely,

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