SSBAC
SHELTER AND SUPPORT
BOARD ADVOCACY COALITION

March 20, 2026

Ministry of Health
The Honourable Sylvia Jones, MPP
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
777 Bay Street, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Via Email: sylvia.jones@ontario.ca

Re: Provincial Decision to Defund Supervised Consumption Services

Dear Minister Jones,

I am writing to you on behalf of the **Shelter and Support Board Advocacy Coalition (SSBAC)** in response to the Provincial government's decision to defund supervised consumption and treatement services across Ontario.

The SSBAC is a coalition of Board Directors - community voices – from shelters in Toronto, including Fred Victor, Dixon Hall, Fife House, Eva's, YWCA Toronto, TNG and L'Agapanthe. The SSBAC is supported by its partners, the Toronto Shelter Network and the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN).

Supervised consumption sites, such as the one operated by Fred Victor, have a proven role in safeguarding the lives of persons who are homeless and who use the shelter system. Ending funding for supervised consumption and treatment services across Ontario creates gaps in health care during an ongoing toxic drug crisis. Supervised consumption sites provide essential health services, playing an important role in preventing overdoses, responding to medical emergencies, and connecting people to health care, housing supports, and opioid agonist treatment.

Recent studies, including a January 2026 McGill University analysis of Toronto data, indicated crime did not increase in neighbourhoods surrounding supervised consumption sites, and, in some cases, decreased. A study published in *JAMA Network Open* also found in Toronto neighborhoods with supervised consumption sites, robbery dropped 40%, bike thefts dropped 16%, and shootings dropped 57% compared to other areas.

DIXON HALL eva's FIFE HOUSE HOPE HELP HOME fred victor L'Agapanthe Maison de transition de La Passerelle-I.D.É.

TNG Community Services | CENTRAL NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE NEIGHBOURHOOD LINK ST. STEPHEN'S COMMUNITY HOUSE | YWCA TORONTO NATIONAL ADVOCACY. COMMUNITY ACTION. United Way Greater Toronto FUNDED AGENCY | ONTARIO NONPROFIT NETWORK | TORONTO SHELTER NETWORK

Supervised consumption programs have reduced public drug use while improving connections to health services. Many of the alternative supports proposed by the Province, in particular HART Hubs, have not been fully implemented and are not a replacement for supervised consumption services. Moreover, removing services before replacement supports are operational risks leaving people with active substance use with nowhere to go for care.

HART Hubs are meant to treat clients with complex service needs by providing safety and support for substance use. Research has shown that supervised consumption sites improve access to health care services, help to build relationships between health care providers and people who inject drugs, and increase entry into substance use treatment programs – the declared goal of HART Hubs. The decision to defund supervised consumption services counters the very aims of the HART Hubs, disregards evidence and expert advice, was done without consultations with those directly involved in these services, will put vulnerable and marginalized people at greater risk, and cost lives.

The Supreme Court of Canada – *Canada Attorney General v. PHS Community Services Society* [2011] 3 SCR 134 – recognized that denying people access to health services provided through supervised consumption sites threatens their health and their lives. Toronto has already seen a devastating rise in overdose and overdose related deaths since the March 2025 forced closure of multiple safe consumption sites in Toronto. The government's decision to defund supervised consumption sites will further reduce access to critical, lifesaving health care services. It will disproportionately harm already marginalized communities, including Indigenous and racialized people and those experiencing poverty and homelessness. It will put even more strain on homeless respites, shelters, and drop-ins as well as our first responders, emergency departments, and hospitals – and overall, increase Ontario's health care system costs.

SSBAC calls on the Ontario government to reverse its decision to defund supervised consumption services. SSBAC believes that supervised consumption services are part of the health solution, preventing overdoses, responding to medical emergencies, and connecting people to health care, housing supports, and opioid agonist treatment. Supervised consumption services save lives!

Yours truly,

Jawad A. Kassab, LLB, MBA, MDiv
Shelter and Support Board Advocacy Chair
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CC: Vijay Thanigasalam, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Anthony Leardi, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health
Deborah Richardson, Deputy Minister of Health
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Ashlee Babcock, Executive Director of Policy, Office of the Minister of Health