

Dear Members of the Region of Waterloo Community and Health Services Committee,

Over the past week we began to see the impacts of the province's decision to close many consumption and treatment services sites, including our own. This decision set back a decade of progress in health policy in the care and treatment of substance use disorders and is coming at a massive cost to our community.

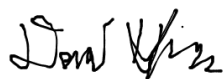
This will unfortunately include the substantial loss of life. The Kitchener CTS reversed well over 1000 overdoses in its lifetime, a proportion of which would have been fatal. The on-site and associated healthcare services addressed many issues, including co-occurring mental health disorders, infections, wounds, and other health needs that this population often experiences barriers to accessing in other settings. Service delivery through harm reduction services is far cheaper and more effective than hospital-based medical care later on.

Our governments have an obligation to care for the most vulnerable members of society. The dismantling of essential harm reduction services will both increase mortality rates and also exacerbate pressures on our healthcare system, law enforcement, and social services. Harm reduction services are proven to save lives, improve community health, and reduce the burden on emergency services. By removing these services, we are not only turning our backs on those in need but also ignoring the evidence and success stories from our own and countless other jurisdictions.

The Community and Health Services Committee should support the motion tabled by Councillor Wolf today including requesting the province provide immediate funding, support, and then legislative approval to maintain CTS operations. As with the initial launch of our local CTS site their continuation requires widespread advocacy and collective action. Besides supporting this motion, please use any other means of influence you have towards this goal.

Now, more than ever, we need to stand united in our commitment to supporting those struggling with substance use disorders, ensuring they have access to life-saving resources and compassionate care. Thank you for your time, and for considering the importance of these vital services to the well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hopkins". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

David Hopkins