

## **Delegation to Regional Council supporting a motion to request provincial funding to maintain CTS operations during injunction period**

Good afternoon members of Waterloo Region Community and Health Services Committee, my name is Keith Rivers, I am a resident of the region since 1955 and am representing Citizens for Cambridge, a grass roots organization focussed on community betterment.

### **Lifesaving and Reduced Harm**

Citizens for Cambridge support the motion presented in agenda item 9.1 which is critical to saving lives and reducing harm among vulnerable constituents and the community.

### **Cost Effective and Efficient**

CTS services provide a cost effective and healthcare efficient service to those in the community consuming illegally poisoned drug supply.

### **Return to 911 responses only?**

Consider the response to overdoses without a CTS - calling 911. Calls regarding a citizen emergency, initiates dispatch of police, fire and emergency services taking critical minutes to reach and respond to the patient comatose from a drug overdose. Delayed resuscitation is traumatic for all involved not just the patient but the emergency responders and any bystanders who may be witnessing this event. Furthermore, rushing emergency services through the city as needed to save a person puts the entire community at risk of accident. Additionally, these services are no longer available for other emergencies during the time of performance. Beyond that, the sheer expense of this type of response is highly inefficient and ineffective in terms of patient service. Delivery is late risking physical damage and absolutely traumatic for someone consuming illegal drugs to be revived in the face of uniformed Police, Fire and EMS personnel who in this moment not only represent a threat but are perceived as being traditionally unhelpful to an individual using drugs. From all perspectives it could hardly be more inefficient and ineffective.

### **Compare to Immediate Clinical Support**

Contrast that to the services provided by a CTS where the patient comes in voluntarily to a welcoming place for surveillance by a nurse who can administer immediate aid if there is any sign of an overdose occurring. This prevents the physical injury that occurs when poisoned drugs are ingested for a period of time interrupting a person's normal functions during a near-death coma. The individual is cared for immediately in a least costly intervention that supports them during a time of reduced breathing or heart function and revives them into a caring and much more receptive environment. The CTS saves emergency responders and the community from unnecessary trauma. Because it is also

less traumatic for the patient, it provides a significant opportunity for a drug user to seek health care which often can culminate in an opportunity for treatment and recovery. This is a great example of preventive health care.

### **Unequivocal Support for CTS**

We, the Citizens of Cambridge support the continuation of a CTS service that makes sense economically, medically, and socially, and that provides health safety for both the drug user and the community. The CTS contributes to community well-being by providing a service with maximum medical efficiency and minimal impact on the community at large.

### **A Commonsense Solution is Needed**

Given this contrast in situation, it makes no sense whatsoever to discontinue consumption and treatment services which can only be replaced with 911 emergency services that are much less effective and very detrimental to many elements of the community. No one wants to see public illegal drug use nor hear sirens and see responders rushing towards an emergency. It seems clear that continuation of CTS services far out-weigh any kind of supposed but unproven community risk in the neighbourhood of CTS services - a Health Clinic for a particularly vulnerable and hard to reach group of citizens that we all should support. Let's all vote to support this motion.