



Hon. Deb Matthews
Minister of Health
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

July 2, 2013

Open Letter: Registered Nurses Urge Provincial Funding for Supervised Injection Services

Dear Minister Matthews,

This letter is to urge you to heed the overwhelming evidence that supervised injection services (SIS) are critical health services that save lives and improve the collective health of our communities.

As you know, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) depends on evidence to inform guidelines on clinical best practices, healthy work environments, and our organization's recommendations on public policy. The peer-reviewed literature is extensive: supervised injection services, such as Vancouver's Insite, have greatly reduced the risk of infectious disease and virtually eliminated the risk of death by overdose. That is why RNAO as well as the Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Public Health Association, Community and Hospital Infection Control Association-Canada, Public Health Physicians of Canada, and the Urban Public Health Network support the provision of SIS health services as part of a range of comprehensive services that must be available for people who inject drugs.

Minister Matthews, we urge you to support harm reduction models such as SIS by speaking out against the federal government's Bill C-65 that imposes onerous requirements designed to prevent SIS implementation. For reasons well-documented by Toronto Public Health's recent report on SIS in Toronto, we also urge the provincial government to fund the integration of SIS into existing provincially funded clinical health services for people who use drugs.

Thank you for considering these recommendations that will save lives, improve health outcomes, and make our health services even more excellent.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doris Grinspun", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Doris Grinspun, RN, MSN, PhD, LLD(hon), O.ONT.
Chief Executive Officer, RNAO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rhonda Seidman-Carlson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rhonda Seidman-Carlson, RN, MN
President, RNAO

Cc: Premier Kathleen Wynne
Tim Hudak, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario
Andrea Horwath, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Ontario