

## The Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy

### Statement of Support for the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition's *Open Letter: Supervised Consumption Services site closures due to lack of funding from Ministry of Health*

Supervised consumption services (SCS) are evidence-based lifesaving health service for people who use drugs. In the face of the national public health crisis that is the drug poisoning and policy crisis, access to SCS needs to be recognized as an integral part of Ontario's publicly funded healthcare system.

On March 4, 2024 an open letter regarding supervised consumption services site closures due to a lack of funding from the Ministry of Health was sent on behalf of over 51 groups from across Ontario. The letter included the following eight calls to action:

1. Immediately provide direct emergency funding on or before March 29 to supervised consumption services (SCS) sites that have submitted their Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) applications to the province and are under imminent threat of closure or have closed due to lack of funding.
2. Urgently provide, improve, and sustain uninterrupted provincial funding for SCS, including inhalation, and ensure equity in regional service availability, particularly in northern communities.
3. Phase out the Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) approach to funding SCS, which requires additional and overly stringent conditions over and above Health Canada's requirements.
4. In the interim, immediately remove the cap on the number of funded SCS sites and the prohibition on inhalation services under the provincial CTS model.
5. In the interim, introduce transparency and an expedited 30-day timeline for responding to applications under the provincial CTS model.
6. Introduce a low-barrier process by which community organizations can seek provincial funding for SCS.
7. Integrate SCS into Ontario's core funded healthcare system with ongoing, integrated funding and resources.
8. Meet with us by March 13.

As of March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 no response from the Ministry was received despite the request for an emergency meeting by March 13<sup>th</sup>.

The Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy endorses the calls to action included in the open letter and hopes to see the Ontario government take the urgent action needed to ensure equitable

access to lifesaving SCS sites across the province including the communities present within Waterloo Region.

**Adopted by the WRIDS Steering Committee,**

**April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**

**Signed by,**



**Cameron Dearlove, on behalf of the WRIDS Steering Committee**

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