
Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Katherine Steinhoff - Moms Stop the Harm MSTH - Follow-Up on MSTH Email Request Regarding Overdose Crisis - CK 255-1
Attachments: msth_english_letter.pdf; msth_english_resolution.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@saskatoon.ca>

Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 10:46 AM

To: City Council <City.Council@saskatoon.ca>

Subject: Email - Communication - Katherine Steinhoff - Moms Stop the Harm MSTH - Follow-Up on MSTH Email Request Regarding Overdose Crisis - CK 255-1

Submitted on Thursday, December 10, 2020 - 10:46

Submitted values are:

Date Thursday, December 10, 2020

To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

First Name Kathie

Last Name Steinhoff

Phone

Email

Address Hickory Street

City Ottawa

Province Yukon

Postal Code

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable) Moms Stop The Harm (MSTH)

Subject FOLLOW-UP on MSTH email request regarding overdose crisis

Meeting (if known)

Comments

I am writing, on behalf of Moms Stop The Harm (MSTH), to inquire whether you received the MSTH email request that was sent on November 17th and, if so, whether council will be considering our request to pass a resolution on the overdose crisis.

Please note that while the MSTH resolution points out that opioid-related fatalities are over 16,360 (January 2016 - March 2020), a Globe and Mail editorial recently indicated the death toll is approaching 19,000.

A generic version of the MSTH request is attached.

Thank you for any information you are able to provide.

Sincerely,

Katherine Steinhoff

Municipal Lead, Moms Stop the Harm

Attachments

[msth_english_letter.pdf](#)

[msth_english_resolution.pdf](#)



MOMS STOP THE HARM

5-6038 Willow Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, V5Z 3S6

November 2020

Dear “First Name” “Last Name”,

Re: The Overdose Crisis

I am writing, on behalf of Moms Stop The Harm (MSTH), to request your assistance in ending the overdose crisis and the toll it is taking on our communities.

MSTH is a network of Canadian families impacted by substance use related harms and deaths. Our network provides peer support to grieving families and those with loved ones who use or have used substances. In addition, our organization works hard to change failed drug policies.

MSTH knows that municipalities have also been working hard, both on the ground and with representative bodies such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). We would like to sincerely thank you for your efforts and thank FCM members for the call for a pan-Canadian response to the opioid crisis.

We recognize that your efforts have brought significant progress in some areas, but there is still a long way to go. At present, there is no comprehensive plan to deal with the opioid crisis, even though it is one of the largest public health emergencies of our lifetime, with a death on average about every two hours and a death toll of over 16,360 since 2016 (January 2016 to March 2020). Tragically, the number of people dying from overdoses has increased in 2020 in many parts of the country.

As you may know, federal Health Minister Patty Hajdu has resisted calls to declare the overdose crisis a public health emergency. She has also stated that it is premature to talk about drug policy reforms until there are comprehensive supports for people to get well. Recently, the Minister altered this position somewhat by indicating that officials are “deliberating” over decriminalization.ⁱ MSTH agrees that supports are needed but believes the government’s focus should be on harm reduction and saving lives so that people are able to live long enough to access supports. Currently, the stigma of criminalization causes people to hide their substance use, and many use and die alone.

It is our view that the federal government needs to do much more than it has to date, which is why we are requesting that your municipality, together with others in Canada, consider passing the attached resolution calling on the federal government to: 1) do the right thing and declare the overdose crisis a national public health emergency, and 2) work with provinces to develop a comprehensive pan-Canadian plan for ending the overdose crisis.

Thank you very much for considering this request. If you have any concerns about our resolution, please consider passing your own version of a resolution. You can reach us by email at info@momsstoptheharm.com or mail at 5-6038 Willow Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, V5Z 3S6. Additional information about MSTH can be found on our website at <https://www.momsstoptheharm.com/>

Sincerely,



Leslie McBain
Co-founder
Chair, Board of Directors
Moms Stop The Harm



Petra Schultz
Co-founder
Vice Chair, Board of Directors
Moms Stop The Harm

ⁱ Hina Alam, “Federal health minister says it’s too early for broad drug decriminalization”, Canadian Press, January 16, 2020, <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/federal-health-minister-says-it-s-too-early-for-broad-drug-decriminalization-1.4771090>; CBC, The Current, January 9, 2020, 59:18 minute mark, <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-63-the-current/clip/15754621-remembering-lost-iranian-plane-crash-the-politics-investigating> ; Teresa Wright, “Discussion on decriminalizing drugs should be considered in wake of opioid deaths: Tam”, The Canadian Press, August 22, 2020, <https://globalnews.ca/news/7292817/opioid-crisis-decriminalization-tam/>

Overdose Crisis

Whereas the opioid crisis is one of the largest public health emergencies of our lifetime, with a death on average about every two hours and a death toll of over 16,360 since 2016 (January 2016 to March 2020).

Whereas other countries have significantly reduced drug-related fatalities with reforms such as legal regulation of illicit drugs to ensure safe supply and decriminalization for personal use.

Whereas the federal government has indicated it is premature to discuss these measures until there are comprehensive supports for people to get well.

Whereas supports are needed, but measures that save lives are essential if people are to survive and access supports.

Whereas the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has stated that they agree the evidence suggests “decriminalization for simple possession as an effective way to reduce the public health and public safety harms associated with substance use”, causing the government to indicate that it is now “deliberating” over decriminalization.

Whereas the overdose crisis rages, showing few signs of abating.

Be it resolved that the Government of Canada declare the overdose crisis a national public health emergency so that it is taken seriously and funded appropriately.

Be it also resolved that the Government of Canada immediately seek input from the people most affected by this crisis and meet with provinces and territories to develop a comprehensive, pan-Canadian overdose action plan, which includes comprehensive supports and full consideration of reforms that other countries have used to significantly reduce drug-related fatalities and stigma, such as legal regulation of illicit drugs to ensure safe supply of pharmaceutical alternatives to toxic street drugs, and decriminalization for personal use.

MAILING INFORMATION

Please send your resolution to Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, Health Canada, Address Locator 0900C2, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0K9

Please send a copy of your resolution to:

- 1) Moms Stop the Harm at info@momsstoptheharm.com or 5-6038 Willow Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, V5Z 3S6
- 2) Your local member of Parliament (MP). You can get your MP's contact information information by calling 1-800-463-6868 or going to <https://www.ourcommons.ca/en>