

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

### 5. Tackling BC's Toxic Drug Health Emergency

Submitted by: Councillor Carr

#### WHEREAS

1. Drug overdose deaths in BC continue unabated and by June 2023 there have been over 12,000 drug overdose deaths province-wide since the Provincial Health Officer's declaration of a Drug Overdose Public Health Emergency in 2016;
2. The current federally-permitted "safe supply" of up to 2.5 grams of heroin, fentanyl, methamphetamines or MDMA per day is not preventing addicts from turning to the illegal drug market and there are an inadequate number of resources including drug testing, overdose prevention sites, and treatment facilities throughout the province to keep users safe;
3. Where they exist, supervised injection and harm reduction sites have prevented some deaths, but are now less available because many users are now inhaling rather than injecting drugs and the provincial Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act requires smoke and vapour-free indoor public environments;
4. The continuing insufficient number of detox beds and addiction treatment facilities result in long wait lists, preventing needed "treatment on demand";
5. There are not enough available prevention programs, especially for youth.

#### THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the following resolution be submitted to UBCM as a 2023 UBCM Resolution, and titled: "Tackling BC's Toxic Drug Health Emergency".

## RESOLUTION

### **MOTION: Tackling BC's Toxic Drug Health Emergency**

WHEREAS the continued illegal supply of increasingly toxic street drugs has led to over 12,000 toxic drug overdose deaths since the BC Provincial Health Officer's declaration of a Drug Overdose Public Health Emergency in 2016, and government measures to date, including the current 3-year federal safe drug supply pilot programme, have failed to reduce the criminal supply of toxic drugs;

AND WHEREAS there is insufficient province-wide access to resources and services that would increase users' safety. Including drug testing and overdose prevention sites as well as detox beds and treatment services on demand, and preventative programs, especially for youth, and even current safe injection sites are now hampered in providing safety since more users are now inhaling rather than injecting drugs and provincial regulations restrict indoor smoking and vaping:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM urge the BC Government to work with medical researchers, experts, local service providers, other key stakeholders and people who use drugs to determine a comprehensive, integrated, economically and geographically accessible, and evidence-based province-wide plan to better tackle BC's toxic drug health emergency, including:

- Increasing safety by:
  - Rapidly delivering access province-wide to resources and services that will improve users' and public safety, including drug testing, supervised consumption spaces and overdose prevention sites;
  - Quickly amending the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act to enable supervised consumption and other harm reduction facilities to allow inhalation or smoking of drugs where operations can otherwise be demonstrated as WorkSafe compliant;
  - Preparing for a review of the current 3-year federal safe drug supply pilot program by determining the most appropriate drugs and amounts needed for a safer drug supply sufficient to eliminate the need for users to acquire toxic drugs from the illegal market;
- Increasing economically accessible treatment by supporting the BC Nurses' Union 2023 convention resolution to "develop a system of mental and addiction treatment and recovery services that are regulated, evidence-based, economically and geographically accessible, and are available when people are looking for it";
- Increasing prevention by investing in mental health treatment and life-enhancing youth, family and community well-being programs, including early childhood detection, intervention and ongoing supports for learning differences.

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