

Friday, December 15th, 2023

Heidi Eisenhauer
Executive Director
Réseau ACCESS Network

Dear Ms. Eisenhauer;

Re: Support and scientific evaluation for The Spot supervised consumption site

I would like to reiterate my support for the ongoing implementation of The Spot, Sudbury's supervised consumption site. As you well know, Sudbury is disproportionately impacted by overdose mortality, with a per capita rate roughly three times the provincial average. Supervised consumption sites are the most effective structural intervention we have to prevent overdose. Beyond providing a sterile and safe space in which to inject drugs, they also act as hubs of naloxone distribution, drug toxicity trends, and safer drug use education.

As I stated in my witness testimony to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health this previous Monday, December 11th, I am deeply troubled by the impending closure of The Spot given that this will undoubtedly lead to many more deaths from overdose. My fears are further confirmed by recent research that my team at the Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto conducted in partnership with the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario, which found that the opening of Toronto's nine supervised consumption sites in Toronto coincided with a two-thirds reduction in the overdose mortality rate in the neighbourhoods in which they were placed, with significant reductions observed as far as 5km away. This work is currently in press at *The Lancet Public Health*, the world's leading public health journal, and will be published in the new year.

There is clear relevance here to what will happen if the The Spot were to close. Furthermore, I am by this letter hereby committing myself to undertaking a scientific evaluation of The Spot to evaluate its impact on overdose mortality across the City of Sudbury, if the site were to remain open. This work will employ the same methods as the study recently undertaken in Toronto (i.e., spatial analysis of the impact of supervised consumption site implementation on population-level overdose mortality). I will undertake this work pro bono, and commit the full resources of my team to carry it out.

Beyond this work, I am also gratified that Réseau ACCESS Network is interested in potentially piloting DoseCheck, a mobile drug checking technology, which I am developing with assistance from NORCAT. Of course, doing so would be difficult unless The Spot remains open, as the site and its highly trained staff would be the pilot hub.

Thank you for your dedication to saving lives in Sudbury, to your collaboration, and I truly hope that support is found to continue to allow The Spot to save lives in Sudbury.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan Werb', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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Dan Werb, PhD

Director, Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation, St. Michael's Hospital

CEO and Co-Founder, DoseCheck Technologies Limited

Associate Professor

Division of Infectious Diseases & Global Public Health, University of California San Diego

Institute of Health Policy, Management & Evaluation, University of Toronto