

Dear Hon. Michael Tibollo,

It was a pleasure to meet you last month and to discuss common issues regarding our collective work in mental health and addictions.

I write today for a related reason. The local supervised consumption site in Sudbury has approval from Health Canada to operate but has not received a response from the province regarding their application for operational funding that was submitted two years ago. They received one year of temporary funding from the City of Greater Sudbury to operate while waiting for a response from the province. That municipal funding expires at the end of December 2023.

Following a death near the South Riverdale Community Health Centre supervised consumption site, the province has paused approving funding to any currently unfunded sites (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ont-consumption-sites-1.6988148>). That means the site in Sudbury will close at the end of December unless the province reverses its decision. Indeed, several supervised consumption sites in the communities near Sudbury and Timmins are at risk of closure. Should these sites close, the only remaining supervised consumption site in Northern Ontario will be located hundreds of kilometres away in Thunder Bay.

Northern Ontario continues to have an overdose mortality rate three times the provincial average. Supervised consumption sites reduce overdose mortality, prevent disease transmission, and link people who use drugs with health and social services. In the spirit of advocating for public health for our communities and, as the only medical university in this region I respectfully ask that your office take immediate action to secure the funding necessary to preserve the supervised consumption sites in Sudbury and Timmins. Together, we can build a future of quality healthcare and health equity in Northern Ontario.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

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