

May 10, 2018

London City Council
300 Dufferin Avenue
N6B 1Z2

Dear Councillors,

I write in support of the proposed safe injection sites being considered by Council at 441 York Street and 241 Simcoe St.

As noted by the Sisters of St. Joseph in their recent letter to you:

“A recent academic article in the Harm Reduction Journal, “Supervised injection facilities in Canada: past, present, and future,” offers a careful review of the experience and impact of supervised injection facilities (SIFs). It notes that Canadian efforts have learned from positive experiences in Western Europe. In addition, Canada’s first sanctioned SIF, which opened in Vancouver 2003, was rigorously evaluated and met its objective of reducing public disorder, disease transmission and overdoses. Equally important, it successfully referred individuals to a range of external programs including detoxification, and addiction treatment programs. The evaluation demonstrated that the SIF was cost-effective and did not result in increases in crime or encourage initiation into drug use.

It should be noted that over 40 peer-reviewed studies have highlighted the benefits and the lack of negative impacts for this site. Moreover, the Supreme Court of Canada justices ruled 9-0 in favour of the continued operation of the SIF, noting that it “has been proven to save lives with no discernible negative impact on the public safety and health objectives of Canada.” (2011 ruling, p. 139)”

We would, of course, prefer to end the prevalence of drug addictions in our city. However, for those who are addicted the process leading to recovery is long, slow and

Page #2

difficult. Along the way the need for support including harm reduction through safe injection sites is a proven factor in assisting such healing.

Surely a safe injection site is preferable to the proliferation of the discarding of needles in public areas where they can be a hazard not only to the user but to other members of the public.

A well-managed safe injection site can and will be a step towards a healthier city.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Rev. Linda Nicholls
Bishop of Huron