

alPHa's members are
the public health units
in Ontario.

alPHa Sections:

Boards of Health
Section

Council of Ontario
Medical Officers of
Health (COMOH)

**Affiliate
Organizations:**

Association of Ontario
Public Health Business
Administrators

Association of
Public Health
Epidemiologists
in Ontario

Association of
Supervisors of Public
Health Inspectors of
Ontario

Health Promotion
Ontario

Ontario Association of
Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Association of
Public Health Nursing
Leaders

Ontario Dietitians in
Public Health

November 5, 2018

Hon. Christine Elliott
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Flr, 80 Grosvenor St,
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Elliott,

Re: Consumption and Treatment Services

On behalf of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) and its member Medical Officers of Health, Boards of Health and Affiliate organizations, we are writing today to reiterate our support for supervised consumption services and express our gratitude for your decision to allow these to continue to operate within the new consumption and treatment model.

This decision demonstrates that the Government of Ontario has responded to expert advice and recognized that these services save lives. It also demonstrates recognition that these present an important opportunity to link people with vital supports such as addiction treatment, housing, mental health counselling, and employment.

Harm reduction is a crucial facet of a comprehensive drug strategy. People cannot enter treatment programs if they die of overdose. There is also ample evidence that harm reduction approaches reduce the transmission of blood-borne infections like HIV by reducing unsafe injection practices. They can also reduce public drug use and discarded injection equipment, increase public safety, and increase engagement of at-risk individuals with supports that they may not otherwise seek out.

A public health approach to drug use in Ontario would be characterized by a comprehensive, evidence-based strategy to prevent the poor health outcomes and premature death associated with substance use disorders. Your commitment to retaining existing supervised consumption facilities and to strengthening their role as a link to essential additional supports will lay a strong foundation for such a strategy.

As Ontario's front-line public health agencies, our members have specific obligations under the Ontario Public Health Standards that are aimed at preventing substance use and reducing its associated harms. This includes needs assessments, public education, fostering supportive environments and working with partners to implement and evaluate programs and services.

As such, we look forward to adding our expertise to that of Ontario's specialists in mental health and addictions, law enforcement and community outreach to ensure that the potential for Ontario's Consumption and Treatment Facilities is fully realized.

We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss our contributions further and look forward to participating in any consultations that may occur. Noting that your team is already planning to attend an upcoming Board meeting of alPHa, please contact Executive Director Loretta Ryan for any follow up at loretta@alphaweb.org or 416-595-0006 extension 22.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Robert Kyle,
aPHa President



Dr. Chris Mackie,
Chair, Council of Ontario Medical
Officers of Health (COMOH)



Trudy Sachowski,
Chair, Boards of Health Section

COPY: Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Health and Long-Term Care
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
France G  linas, Health Critic, NDP.