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APR 04 2019

Mr. Jeff Lehman
Mayor of Barrie
P.O. Box 400
Barrie ON L4M 4T5

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MAYOR'S OFFICE

Dear Mayor Lehman,

Thank you for your correspondence of March 8, 2019, addressed to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Your letter was forwarded to the Minister of Health, Ginette Petitpas Taylor, and I have been asked to respond on the Minister's behalf.

Health Canada is deeply concerned about the number of opioid overdoses and deaths across the country and the devastating impacts that it is having on the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Addressing the opioid crisis remains a top priority.

Since 2017, the Government of Canada has committed over \$350 million in funding toward a comprehensive public health emergency response to the crisis. This includes: reducing legislative and regulatory barriers to life-saving harm reduction and treatment—such as by making Naloxone available without a prescription and streamlining the process to establish supervised consumption sites; supporting prevention, such as through new guidelines for the prescription of opioids, restrictions on the marketing of opioids and supporting awareness and stigma reduction amongst Canadians; providing law enforcement with the tools to detect, disrupt and dismantle criminal networks responsible for the proliferation of dangerous street drugs such as fentanyl in communities; and, improving the Government's knowledge base on opioid-related deaths and harms to help better tailor interventions on the ground.

Announced as part of Budget 2018, the Emergency Treatment Fund provided one-time emergency funding of \$150 million for provinces and territories to improve access to evidence-based treatment services. On January 23, 2019, the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario signed a bilateral agreement under this Fund. The bilateral agreement provides \$51.1 million, cost-matched by the Province of Ontario, to increase access to treatment for substance use disorder. The bilateral agreement can be found on the Government of Canada website and the attached Action Plan outlines how Ontario plans to invest federal funding to improve access to treatment services.

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Budget 2019 proposes to provide additional funding of \$30.5 million over 5 years for targeted measures to address persistent gaps in harm reduction and treatment. Specifically, funding will support efforts to expand access to a safe supply of prescription opioids, protecting people with problematic opioid use from the risks of overdose and death. It will also support better access to opioid overdose response training and to Naloxone—a life-saving medication that can stop or reverse an opioid overdose—in underserved communities.

Health Canada also delivers the Substance Use and Addictions Program, which is a federal contributions program that provides financial support to provinces, territories, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, and key stakeholders to strengthen responses to substance use and addiction issues in Canada. The funding offered through this program supports evidence-informed and innovative initiatives across health promotion, prevention, harm reduction, treatment and rehabilitation, targeting a broad range of legal and illegal substances including opioids.

Additional information is available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/substance-use-addictions-program-call-for-proposals-guidelines-applicants.html>, or by contacting SUAP-PUDS@hc-sc.gc.ca

Thank you again for taking the time to write on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Morissette', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Guy Morissette
Director General
Key Initiatives Directorate
Controlled Substances and Cannabis Branch
Health Canada