



JAGMEET SINGH

DÉPUTÉ | MP, BURNABY SOUTH | BURNABY-SUD

April 15, 2019

His Worship Jeff Lehman
Mayor, City of Barrie
Office of the Mayor
PO Box 400
Barrie, ON L4M 4T5

Re: Barrie City Council Resolution on Canada's Opioid Overdose Crisis

Dear Mayor Lehman,

Thank you very much for sharing your city's resolution on the ongoing opioid overdose crisis in Canada. It is clear that the community of Barrie is suffering disproportionately in the face of opioid addiction, overdoses, and deaths.

I wanted you to know that Canada's escalating opioid crisis is an urgent priority for the NDP. I believe we need to do everything possible to address this public health crisis. That's why we have consistently called on the federal Liberal government to declare the opioid crisis a Public Health Emergency. This declaration would make sure that additional resources and support would be available to combat this crisis and help save lives in communities like yours across Canada.

Too many communities like Barrie have experienced tragedy due to this crisis. I firmly believe that it's the government's responsibility to protect its citizens and that it's our shared responsibility to save lives.

In an effort to more fully understand the crisis in our communities, I visited some of the overdose prevention sites that have popped up across Canada. I was amazed at the dedication of the tireless front line workers—but they can't turn this around without significant financial and legislative support from the federal government and the Canadian public.

As you called for in your resolution, we need more effective harm-reduction services to reduce the loss of life through community-based services that can help to reduce overdose incidents, and provide support for individuals to reduce or end their drug use.

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We also must do more as a country to address the root causes of drug addiction by working to reduce poverty, tackle the housing crisis, and provide strong services to help people with trauma and mental illness. At the NDP, we advocate that the federal government learn from Portugal's approach to drug policy, including decriminalization, to better protect lives, end addiction, and strengthen communities.

Canadians have been waiting too long for real solutions on the opioid crisis. There's no excuse for inaction when peoples' lives are at stake. We owe it to the memory of those that the community of Barrie has lost to put an end to this crisis and save lives.

Thank you again for raising the ongoing issue of the opioid crisis in Barrie with me. It's advocacy like yours that will help make a change.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jagmeet Singh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jagmeet Singh
Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada