

June 5th, 2019

City of Barrie
70 Collier Street
P.O. Box 400
Barrie, ON, L4M 4T5

Re: Proposed Supervised Consumption Site for Barrie, ON

Dear Mayor Lehman and Members of Barrie City Council:

We write to you as clergy in the United Church of Canada serving and/or living in the City of Barrie to offer our support for a Supervised Consumption Site (SCS) in the City of Barrie, and in particular at the location of 90 Mulcaster Street.

In the report titled *Simcoe Muskoka Opioid Strategy: An Action Plan for Our Communities*, Dr. Lisa Simon and Dr. Rebecca Van Iersel in their 'Message from the Co-Chairs,' state that, "the burden of opioid misuse, addiction and overdose in Simcoe and Muskoka is an urgent problem. As an indication of this, rates of opioid-related deaths and emergency department visits in Simcoe Muskoka are well above provincial averages, and continue to climb substantially." We understand the need for urgent care and intervention for harm reduction. We support the action plan and foundation pillars as related to the SMOS report.

We support the 90 Mulcaster Street location for the SCS because of the counselling and addictions services offered on-site by the Canadian Mental Health Association and also because we recognize that those most in need, such as people at the David Busby Centre, are close by. We hope that the City Council of Barrie will support a site that offers intervention and treatment possibilities.

While we recognize the proximity of the address to Berczy Street Park, we also understand that, as Dr. Simon explained, there are ways to successfully mitigate the 100 to 200 metre variance. We concur that would include continued dialogue with the community.

We believe that the South Muskoka Opioid Strategy has taken many factors into consideration in choosing 90 Mulcaster Street. Several Barrie City Councillors stated: "We have to get this right" and we believe that SMOS is doing just that.

As Ministry Personnel in the City of Barrie we often engage with those who live on the margins. Our faith teaches us that we are called to act with justice when we see social issues in our community that need to be engaged. Reading through the SMOS Action Plan, Pillar Three: Harm Reduction, we are able to recognize that an SCS will not solve all the problems for the City of Barrie when it comes to addictions, but it will help to reduce the risk of HIV and Hepatitis C; it will enhance the pathways to treatment; it will be a step toward reducing public injection and it will provide an effective referral mechanism toward treatment.

We look forward to continuing to be part of the solution regarding the opioid crisis.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Susan Eagle (Minister, Grace United Church)
Andrea Wheaton, DLM (Minister, Burton Avenue United Church)
Rev. Phil Dallimore (Minister, Northwest Barrie United Church)
Rev. Hewitt Holmes (Minister, Collier Street United Church)
Jeffrey Dale, MFA (Youth Ministries Coordinator, Grace United Church and Shining Waters Regional Council)
Rev. Philip Cable (Registered Psychotherapist)
Rev. Thelma Arnott (Voluntary Associate Minister, Grace United Church)
Rev. George Moore (Voluntary Associate Minister, Grace United Church)
Rev. Patricia Gale-Macdonald (Minister Emeritus, Burton Avenue United Church)
Rev. Kirsty Hunter (Resident of Barrie; Minister, Minesing United Church)

Rev. Jane Sullivan (Resident of Barrie; Minister, New Lowell and Creemore United Church)
Rev. Ruth McDonald (Listening Post Minister; Voluntary Associate Minister, Burton Avenue United Church)
Rev. Dr. Todd McDonald (Resident of Barrie; Pastoral Relations Minister, Shining Waters Regional Council)

cc: **Simcoe Muskoka Opioid Strategy**
c/o Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
15 Sperling Drive
Barrie, ON
L4M 6K9