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Friendship Baptist Church

July 13, 2006

Ms. Beth Pieteron
Director General
Drug Strategy and Controlled Substances Program
Health Canada
123 Slater Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

Dear Ms. Pieteron,

As the Senior Pastor of Friendship Baptist Church of Coquitlam, BC, and member of the Board of Directors for both the British Columbia Baptist Conference and the Baptist General Conference of Canada, I would like to express my support for the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) application for an exemption under Section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

In serving as clergy in the Greater Vancouver area the past 14 years, and overseeing teams who feed and clothe the homeless of Vancouver Eastside once a week for the past eight years, I have witnessed the need for a credible facility where people can inject in a safe environment. It is truly heart breaking to see people openly injecting drugs in alleys and dumpsters and something needs to be done. I am very concerned about addiction issues overall that I commonly must deal with as a Senior Pastor. I am convinced that the only way forward is through a compassionate approach that engages people who struggle daily with their addictions. For the people living in the Eastside, the supervised injection site is a program that in many ways embodies this compassion.

I have also been following some of the results of the evaluation that have been presented in the Vancouver media. This would indicate that the impact of the supervised injection site has been extremely positive. Providing such a facility, cultivates a safe atmosphere with intentional action of helping the poor, less-fortunate and drug-addicted members of our community. This project is a needed and effective part of the harm reduction strategy of the Downtown Eastside and should be continued with full support. I understand that a failure by the government to renew the exemption under Section 56 would mean the closure of the supervised injection site. In my mind this would be a major step backward for the city of Vancouver and would result in more needless deaths.

Sincerely,

Pastor Dean Davey, MA

"Growing healthy relationships with God and others"