



news

Community wants to keep Insite open

By MATT KIELTYKA, 24 HOURS

A group of local residents and businesses are asking the federal government to heed the advice of scientists, and keep Vancouver's controversial supervised injection site open permanently.

Insite opened as North America's first supervised injection site in September 2003 as a three-year scientific research pilot project, thanks to an exemption from the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act by Health Canada.

And with just two months to go before the exemption grant is up for renewal, the community wants the government to know they want the program kept alive.

"Most important are community safety issues, and it's been very successful in that regard," said Gillian Maxwell, spokesperson for Insite For Community Safety.

"There are fewer people injecting publicly and way less needles discarded in the alleys and on the streets. There's also been a huge shift in people's attitude's towards [addicts], and that also contributes to community cohesion."

IFCS recently sent a letter to Health Canada, urging the department to consider the community's support for the project, as well as scientific research that shows access to Insite leads to increased participation in detox programs and addictions treatment.