

April 3, 2006

Ms Suzanne Desjardins, Director
Office of Research and Surveillance Drug Strategy
And Controlled Substances Program
Health Canada
AL 3509C
Ottawa, ON K1A 1B9

Dear Ms Desjardins:

Re: Furthering Scientific Research

I am writing to urge Health Canada to renew and extend the section 56 exemption (under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, CDSA) for the Vancouver Supervised Injection Site Research Project.

Injection drug use impacts all aspects of our communities; there are public health, safety, economic and legal consequences of problematic substance use. In the three years since the Vancouver SIS began its research project, it has provided invaluable data to other urban cities such as Victoria that are seeking information and suggested solutions to its own population of injection drug users.

The Vancouver SIS is proving to be successful in producing scientific results and demonstrating its effectiveness when integrated as part of an overall harm reduction approach. This includes a decrease in injection drug use and litter in public places, a reduction in overdose deaths and an increased number of injection drug users who receive appropriate treatment.

I feel three years is insufficient time to establish the broader strategy of prevention, outreach, treatment and rehabilitation, research, surveillance, knowledge dissemination and national leadership and coordination.

I believe an extension of the section 56 exemption would allow the Vancouver SIS to continue to research effective strategies to reducing communicable diseases, serious medical complications associated with injection drug use, as well as limiting public consumption of drugs and improving public order.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alan Lowe
MAYOR