

File: 0540-20

November 22, 2019

Chair and Directors
Comox Valley Regional District Board

Dear Chair and Directors:

Re: UBCM Resolutions – Safer Drug Supply & Inhalation Sites

As you are aware, the Comox Valley Regional District recently received correspondence (enclosed) from the City of Victoria respecting two resolutions which, due to time constraints, were not considered at the 2019 Union of British Columbia Municipalities Annual Convention.

Resolution B171 concerns safer drug supply and resolution B172 pertains to observed inhalation sites for overdose prevention. Not only are these matters central to the ongoing opioid crisis but also relevant to the Comox Valley Regional District's strategic driver of Community Partnerships, addressing the health and wellbeing of our community. Further, advancement of these issues may mitigate the impact to our community's first responders, healthcare providers, and others.

As such, I respectfully request the board's consideration of the following:

“WHEREAS the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities endorsed two resolutions from the City of Victoria for consideration at the Union of BC Municipalities Annual Convention which if implemented by the Province of BC, could start saving lives immediately;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the board write a letter to the Provincial Government expressing strong support of the following resolutions:

(B171) Safer Drug Supply to Save Lives

Be it resolved that in an effort to save lives and reduce harm due to an unpredictable and highly-toxic drug supply, and as part of a holistic response to the public-health emergency, including prevention, treatment, and recovery, that the Province of British Columbia work with local communities, Health Authorities across the Province, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and the Ministry of Health ensure that people at risk of toxic supply have access to safer alternatives.

(B172) Observed Inhalation Sites for Risk Mitigation of Overdose and Toxic Drug Supply
be it resolved that to ensure that people at risk of overdose and toxic supply across BC have access to observed consumption services that provide space for inhalation, that the Province of British Columbia fund and work through local communities, Health Authorities across the Province, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the Ministry of Health to provide these services as part of a holistic response to the public-health emergency, including prevention, treatment, and recovery.”

Respectfully,

W. Morin

Wendy Morin
Director

Enclosure: City of Victoria Correspondence dated November 12, 2019



November 12, 2019

Dear UBCM Member Local Governments,

I am writing on behalf of Victoria City Council, requesting favourable consideration of these resolutions and that you share this support with the Provincial Government for the following resolutions. Unfortunately, despite the fact that we have an opioid crisis across the Province, these resolutions did not make it onto the floor of the UBCM at this year's convention as the resolutions session ran out of time.

(B171) Safer Drug Supply to Save Lives

Whereas It has been two years since BC declared a public-health emergency due to increased overdoses, yet the death toll for those consuming substances continues to rise due to an unpredictable and highly-toxic drug supply;

And whereas people with opioid use disorder, a chronic relapsing medical condition, are at high risk of overdose- related harms including death and an estimated 42,200 people inject toxic substances in British Columbia, it is not possible for the treatment system to rapidly increase services fast enough to manage this number of people as "patients" within a medical treatment model given the many challenges in achieving and retaining the people on opioid use disorder treatment, people at risk of overdose in British Columbia do not have access to a safer alternative to the unpredictable, highly-toxic drug supply:

Therefore be it resolved that in an effort to save lives and reduce harm due to an unpredictable and highly-toxic drug supply, and as part of a holistic response to the public-health emergency, including prevention, treatment, and recovery, that the Province of British Columbia work with local communities, Health Authorities across the Province, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, and the Ministry of Health ensure that people at risk of overdose harm have access to safer alternatives.

(B172) Observed Inhalation Sites for Overdose Prevention

Whereas British Columbia is currently experiencing an unprecedented public health emergency due to an unpredictable and highly-toxic drug supply, and smoking or inhalation is the second most common mode of consumption among all people who have died from a suspected illicit drug overdose and the most common mode of consumption among men and those between the ages of 15 and 29;

And whereas observed consumption services (i.e. supervised consumption services and overdose prevention services) are evidence-based harm reduction approaches shown to reduce overdose-related harm, and there is not adequate access to observed consumption services that provide space for inhalation where communities are facing crisis:

Therefore be it resolved that to ensure that people at risk of overdose across BC have access to observed consumption services that provide space for inhalation, that the Province of British Columbia fund and work through local communities, Health Authorities across the Province, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the Ministry of Health to provide these services as part of a holistic response to the public-health emergency, including prevention, treatment, and recovery.

We eagerly look forward to your support on this matter.

Sincerely,



Lisa Helps
Victoria Mayor