

October 3, 2023

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
777 Bay St., 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Hon. Minister Jones:

On behalf of the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health, we are contacting you requesting information on the timelines for approval of the application for a Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) site in the City of Windsor.

The application was originally submitted on July 15, 2022, with regular dialogue occurring with Ministry of Health representatives throughout this time. We wish to commend our contacts at the Ministry who have been supportive, timely, and responsive on multiple occasions while reviewing materials in the first year since submission. To date however they have been unable to provide a timeline for approval. Most recently, following the receipt of primary approval from the Federal Controlled Substances Directorate (Health Canada) on July 21, 2023, all required materials were submitted and there were no remaining questions or concerns which required our attention before moving forward for approval. Subsequent communications on August 9, 2023, and September 7, 2023, confirmed that this was the case.

Since opening its doors on April 26, 2023, as a temporary Urgent Public Health Needs Site, "SafePoint" has had hundreds of visits from people in need of care. Dozens of referrals to addiction treatment, mental health supports, and social services have occurred in addition to primary care, wound care, and foot care on-site. The site has experienced no safety concerns, or issues requiring emergency response and has developed strong working relationships with the residents, law enforcement, and the business community in the surrounding area. In addition, the CTS site received municipal support in the spring of 2022 to proceed with the application that was later validated under the new municipal council. This work has been coordinated in large part by staff at the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU), which led the application process and solely funds the operations of SafePoint. The site is operated by our regional experts in mental health and addiction, Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare.

At present, the City of Windsor and the County of Essex are beginning their 2024 annual budgetary process and are doing so in the absence of clarity on future funding for SafePoint. In particular, whether they will be asked to fund SafePoint operations as part of the cost-sharing model with the province, or whether funding will be granted by the Ministry of Health as part of the provincial model for CTS sites in Ontario. In addition, the Board of Health representatives require this critical piece of information as part of their decision-making process for the WECHU's 2024 budget in order to be prudent and responsible representatives on behalf of local municipalities.

We thank you for your review and consideration of this letter, sent on behalf of the Windsor-Essex County Board of Health.

We require a response by October 13, 2023, in order for our Board of Health to set the 2023 budget for our municipal partners.

Sincerely,



Fabio Costante, Chair



Dr. Kenneth Blanchette, CEO

c:

- Hon. Doug Ford; Premier, Province of Ontario
- Andrew Dowie; Member of Provincial Parliament, Windsor-Tecumseh
- Lisa Gretzky; Member of Provincial Parliament, Windsor West
- Trevor Jones; Member of Provincial Parliament, Chatham-Kent - Leamington
- Anthony Leardi; Member of Provincial Parliament, Essex
- Drew Dilkens; Mayor, City of Windsor
- Steve Vlachodimos; City Clerk & Senior Manager of Council Services, City of Windsor
- Hilda Macdonald; Warden, County of Essex
- Mary Birch; Director, Legislative and Community Service/Clerk, County of Essex