

For immediate release: to the media, Windsor City Council, and concerned citizens 1 of 2

An Open Letter to Windsor City Council from local faith leaders

29 January 2023

We are writing to you to express our support for the Consumption and Treatment site set to open at 101 Wyandotte St. E. We believe that this is a life-saving service and should not be delayed for any reason.

We have come to know the opioid crisis within the lives of our communities of faith and some of us have come to know it personally. Naloxone was distributed to many of our congregations last year by the Health Unit. We read of ever growing numbers of overdoses, deaths and public health warnings and we bear witness to the damage done by drug overdoses at funerals and at prayer.

We are encouraged that WECHU and other organizations have put time and expertise into this site that is just weeks from opening. By providing support through drug checking services, supervised consumption, sterile supplies, basic medical and addictions services this site will save lives.

We remind you that this Consumption and Treatment site has already been approved democratically. This is, by majority, something the community has demonstrated it wants. Years and years of work and consultation with community partners, residents, and businesses cannot be discarded. If there is a motion against the current location, there has to be correlating community data which proves the residents, community partners, and businesses do not want this here - not anecdotal evidence.

As Christians we believe we are at our best when we are loving and supporting the most vulnerable among us. It's clear to us that people who use drugs are vulnerable during this opioid epidemic and that harm reduction *is* love. Faith communities across denominations have been preparing to centre their efforts on helping people in proximity to this Consumption and Treatment site.

We believe that healing and thriving does not happen in isolation. Places that provide shelter, resources, and relationships are central to healing and thriving. This site can be such a place.

For these reasons we pray that you will not withdraw your support from the Consumption and Treatment site. People who use drugs are beloved by God.

Sincerely,

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