

**September 30, 2024**

**City of Kitchener  
200 King Street W, Kitchener, ON N2G 4G7**

**To City of Kitchener Council and Clerk**

Mayor Berry Urbanovic  
Councillor Scott Davey  
Councillor Dave Schnider  
Councillor Jason Deneault  
Councillor Christine Michaud  
Councillor Ayo Owodunni  
Councillor Paul Singh  
Councillor Bil Ioannidis  
Councillor Margaret Johnston  
Councillor Debbie Chapman  
Councillor Stephanie Stretch

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These letters, written by clients and community members who attend the CTS for health and social care, were written to the Minister of Health / Deputy Premier Sylvia Jones, in response to the public announcement that some CTS sites, and the Kitchener site in particular, are being forced to close in March of 2025.

August 27, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I am an addict who, if not for this site, would be dead. I am someone's brother, son, father, uncle. I know I have overdosed accidentally at the site, not knowing the strength of the drug I purchased. I don't overdose on purpose and when being saved with narcan if it would have happened anywhere else, I would have been vulnerable to injury, theft, even death. Please please reconsider. I wish I never would have started. I was trying to not relive the trauma I dealt with as a child.  
**PLEASE DON'T CLOSE THE SITE.**

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August 27, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I find it (the decision to be shut down) unreasonable because we are not close to a high school or kindergarten school. The students that go to this school are all adults going back to school to finish their grade 12 or GED. I urge the Deputy Premier and Minister to change their mind because seeing as we're addicts, the students will see addicts outside using instead of a safe facility that's right next door. It would be safer for both addicts and students because they won't be stepping on used needles or even seeing them because the staff at Sanguen who still go around & that combined with the safe injection site, ensuring you rarely see them on the ground. And I think it would be a huge mistake shutting down this facility as addicts are using for more than injecting on site - but educational support for safe consumption, homelessness, and drug testing, so that's less people in the emergency room because of this safe consumption site.

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August 27, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

In our city, Kitchener Waterloo, the safe consumption site opened. In 4 years until it opened, we lost 470 people due to fatal overdoses. The Region of Waterloo approved a safe consumption site to open in 2019 & in the first 6 months, 900 lives were saved with only one call to 911/EMS. I physically got my first death shortly (1 month) after the CTS opened. They did chest compressions, bagged me, and through CPR my heart rhythms came back. They have saved my life and brought me back from death and back to life 9 more times. It's a very beautiful thing to know that there's somewhere - a safe place with health care, nurses. support and peer worker - can help you realize that you are special. Because of CTS I've been a peer outreach worker. Please consider keeping CTS open so we don't lose a whole shitload of people.

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August 27, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I spent the last 20 years of my life chasing drugs. It was completely debilitating. Drugs was always the first priority. There was no testing and as a result I got xylazine poisoning. I developed sores. After being able to test my drugs I have been able to avoid using xylazine and the sores have now gone away completely. Furthermore I have not had an overdose the entire time the space has been open, whether or not I used there. The staff are so caring and attentive that for the first time in years I am actually considering quitting completely. I can finally imagine going to work part time. They not only provide a safe place to use but they also provide employment to people who would not be understood in the normal job market. They have saved my life.

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August 27, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

Many of my friends and family members are alive because of the CTS in Kitchener. I am grateful. I'm even more grateful that they are not 'just' alive, they are valued and loved and cared-for at the CTS in a way that they are not in other places.

Before it opened I thought maybe the CTS would make them worse because they wouldn't have to hide it anymore and could just go there and spend the day nodding out. It has been the opposite. I have seen the life return to their eyes and the hope to their hearts and they are making plans for their futures. I feel like I have them back even though they are still using drugs. Some of them are so much healthier now than they were a year ago because they have health care at the CTS. They use safer and I don't have to worry as much about finding them dead. Do you know how it feels to worry like that?

They know about drug rehabs and right now they aren't ready for it even though I wish they were ready to stop. That doesn't mean they should be cast aside. I love them and so do a lot of other people. Please don't let them die. Please keep the CTS in Kitchener open so more families and friends can stay alive too.

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August 28, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

The reason why I [name redacted] don't want CTS shut down is one, because over 3 billion or more people will die, aka overdose and there hasn't been any complaints or reports of police coming to the mayor or other people that is working with the mayor and also, two the staff that work at the CTS is really nice, they are not rude or trouble to the people that come in to get stuff for the drugs all of us people smoke. Plus the staff have no reason or CTS site to be shut down because the staff makes sure to tell others that come in to CTS to clean up their messes pick up after themselves. We people come in to CTS site and listen to the staff. Ford can be a nice guy but he's crossing the line about shutting down CTS sites all over the place. I [name redacted] will become a staff and help CTS not shut down. Please Ford don't shut down CTS on Duke Street, right across from the soup kitchen.

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August 28, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I was just informed of a great foolishness. The closing of CTS sites. I am a mother of 4 and a homeowner on [street redacted] in Kitchener. I have an Honours BA from UW. I am [profession].

About 7 years ago I began picking up needles in Victoria Park, on the Iron Horse trail, DTK, and near Cameron Heights school. I would carry them in one hand while walking my children home from outings. I would put them in a plastic container and then the garbage. I felt there was something I didn't know. So the next time I had a bunch of needles in a yogurt container I called the city. They said, just leave them on your front porch and we will send someone to your residence and pick them up.

I was grateful but again, it seemed such a wasteful inefficient process.

And then almost 5 years ago Sanguen's CTS opened and I had a location I could walk the plastic container to for proper disposal. I was so grateful to be a part of keeping Kitchener safe and healthy for everyone.

The first time I brought a container to the CTS was Jan 1st, 2020, New Years Day. I brought my non-verbal autistic daughter who is 20 years old now. A man in a wheelchair and a young lady entered just before



us. I listened to the voice and watched the face of the CTS employee talk to these people with powerful COMPASSION, RESPECT, DIGNITY.....WOW

The woman asked if she could attend to my daughter and me briefly, then returned to care for them.

They were gracious and I explained the yogurt container of needles. The woman gave me a small sharps container that I could keep in my back pack that would hold 10 dirty needles before replacing for disposal.

I walked out of there tears running down my face from the POWERFUL GIFT FROM GOD Sanguen CTS site was in our community.

From the looks on the faces of those two people, that compassion and respect was something they have rarely experienced in their lives.

Over the following years, I saw less and less needles. And 2 years ago, I stopped carrying the little black sharps container in my gym bag because there was no need anymore. DTK was clean. DTK is safe and clean and children from stroller to high school are being programmed every day that safe clean streets are NORMAL, EXPECTED, just the way it is and always will be.

Read The Tipping Point by Elmira's own Malcolm Gladwell.

Seeing dirty needles and people crouched on park benches, alleys and corners leads to feelings of despair, anxiety and depression in all ages, it elevates crime.

To regress DTK to the state of cities like Brantford where I visit and witness the dark, fearful energy, the vast number of police patrolling and filth. Where regular people are afraid to walk the streets or go to parks which only increases crime and drug use.

Our city streets, our parks and trails are overflowing with pedestrians because people FEEL SAFE and see a city they are proud to call HOME.

WE ARE A FAMILY.

The BROKEN WHO CANNOT CARE FOR THEMSELVES ARE OUR RESPONSIBILITY

WE CANNOT REJECT THEM OR NEGLECT THEM

TO REJECT THEM IS TO REJECT A PEACEFUL, CLEAN AND SAFE CITY FOR US, FOR OUR CHILDREN AND THE FUTURE

Please, please, please Don't let ignorant government destroy all that CTS sites have done for our great city

BTW, my non-verbal autistic daughter, my youngest son and I have started volunteering..... being a healthy peaceful presence connecting with people who need connection, love and inclusion at Sanguen.

EDUCATE the people & government who, frightened of a dystopian DTK, will create exactly what they fear because of their ignorance.

Stay Brilliantly Blessed Indeed

[name redacted]

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September 3, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

As an addict and a homeless woman in Waterloo Region, CTS has been a positive support to myself and others. I have extreme anxiety. I don't have any family supports. So with CTS's wonderful welcoming support, and extended hours. The CTS has mental health peer support workers, they go up and beyond as supports for every person. They help every day of the year. The ladies and men who work here are caring, understanding, supportive, underappreciated, underfunded. The CTS has referrals to other community supports and is an amazing go between stepping stone to help people on the right track. These supports are needed - an outreach, drop-in community clinic, for addiction and mental health, nurse care, peer support, referrals, and the last of the supports is clean usage and consumption. Being a homeless woman, being outside, having a clean, sterile environment to use, prep my drugs, for a safe clean place to be while homeless, is very hard. Please don't close this CTS. Thank you.

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September 3, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

So anyway Jonesy close your eyes and picture your in a public park with your friends and family having a social. A loved one brings to you an uncapped used rig she found while looking for the dog's frisbee. Mortifying, right? Why close SCS/CTS sites and have scenarios like this happen to the non-using community all over Ontario?

Also, less disease transmission, employment, isolated controlled use, etc., etc.

Thank you for considering.

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September 3, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

Thank you for your time. I appreciate all workers here. I am beginning to understand myself and enjoy my habit more than depend on it. I think you girls and guys should be paid more. I'd do anything and pay almost any price or contribution to keep CTS going hard and strong.

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September 3, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I am writing this letter in hopes to voice my feelings of necessity towards having a location like CTS in a city like Kitchener, where drug use and the subculture of such is clearly impacted in a greatly positive way through the many services and principles, the hard work of the CTS staff introduced and continue to always provide without wavering. What I'm trying to say is that, as an addict, I just don't believe I would be comfortable in therapy without the staff and their contributions. There has been great strides in progress to improving access to information, materials, handling and cleanliness, and awareness of these topics which creates an extremely necessary and beneficial environment in today's climate for anyone who uses on any level of the spectrum. Consider a city that needs this, has this, and lost it. Consider the person in that same situation.

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September 3, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I am an addict and I have been an addict for most of my life. Because of the drugs I have lost everyone who has ever loved me. I have stolen and lied and been in jail. I did not finish high school. I do not have custody of my kid and my mother has been raising her even though she is supposed to be finished raising children now. You think it is a waste of time and money to keep me alive and so do a lot of other people. But people at the CTS love me. I am learning how to love me too. I don't want to die. Please don't close the CTS in Kitchener. Please don't.

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September 3, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I am writing to voice my vehement opposition to the proposed closure of Consumption & Treatment Services (CTS) sites across Ontario. This potential move is not only short-sighted but also deeply irresponsible. It is both alarming and unacceptable.

CTS sites are a lifeline for individuals battling mental health and substance use issues. They provide unique essential services in our communities. Closing these sites will result in a catastrophic breakdown in care for some of the most vulnerable members of our society. This is a matter of life and death.

CTS sites are a critical component of the mental health and addiction treatment system. Removing them will leave countless individuals without the specialized support they need, inevitably leading to a spike in crises and emergency interventions. This is a blatant disregard for the well-being of those who are already struggling.

As you know, CTS sites manage overdoses and other health issues that impact drug users in the community. The fallout from closing CTS sites will burden emergency services and hospitals. We have an ageing population - it is not only reckless but utterly irresponsible to shift this immense strain onto already overtaxed healthcare resources.

The populations served by CTS sites are among the most marginalized and vulnerable.

Closing these sites will deepen existing health inequities and inflict additional suffering on those who already face significant barriers to care.

The impact on families and communities will be devastating. The support that CTS sites offer extends well beyond individual patients; it strengthens families and supports community stability. To dismantle these services is to undermine the fabric of our communities.

Your responsibility as Minister of Health is to safeguard the well-being of Ontarians, not to jeopardize it for the sake of politically misguided cost-cutting measures. The potential consequences of closing CTS sites are severe and unacceptable. I demand that you halt any plans to close these critical services and instead invest in strengthening and expanding them.

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September 9, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I really hope you reconsider closing the CTS in Kitchener. I wouldn't be here today if not for the site. If you close the site my 2 kids will become orphans, my niece and nephew will not have an uncle & my mom and dad will lose their son. It's not an if but a when. When does my luck run out. Before this site opened I overdosed over 40 times and luckily I had a girlfriend who narcanned me and saved my life. I don't have her in my life anymore. I haven't overdosed where I needed narkan in a year. Closing the site will for sure be a death sentence.

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September 9, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I am writing this letter to bring up the fact as hard of a choice as it was to bring the safety site to use, you opened it up for all the people who don't come there, and all of us that do come and get help to feel safe and are cared for. The trained people are also great for the fact if one of us goes down with an overdose they are right there making sure we're gonna be ok. Staff here are friendly are great to talk to. What I mean, please don't close our site. We will be left with nothing. No place to get clean supplies and if need be we'll use an old dirty needle if we need to but I guess our lives are unimportant. For our safety and not yours or is all health a big deal? So, whomever, please don't close our site. We would like to be safe.

Yours sincerely [name]

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September 10, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

My name is [redacted] and I think the CTS should stay open because you guys have saved so many lives and made a difference. By taking the CTS away you guys don't realize you're taking more people's lives. So why did you even open it in the first place for people like us?? :(

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September 18, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

I appreciated the CTS site in Kitchener. Without this safe consumption site a lot of us would be in jail or dead. Without drug testing a lot of my friends would be dead. Without counselling it would be hard to come back to the light from the darkness and pain that got half the community on opiates and uppers to cope with covid, the economy crash and the pain and suffering. Working to take the site away would cause more damage than good. Reconsider the idea. Signing off, a recovering father of four & a taxpayer.

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September 18, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

My worry is that you will close off these sites and the increase in drug paraphernalia &/or overdoses, drug users passed out, & or using in front of city hall where children can see all of this and could be traumatizing for some young child & or family members. Having the CTS around helps keep users off the street and gives them a warm place in the winter months. Sometimes just gives them a place to use the washroom facilities because most businesses will not let customers use theirs. This is a safe place to use and dispose of paraphernalia away from the general community. I am worried this will become an epidemic all on its own without CTS.

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September 18, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

You look at me and see a useless junky. I look at you and see an uncaring person with too much power. Maybe we are both right. At least I don't want you dead because of your circumstances. Closing the Kitchener CTS is death for me and a checkmark in a box for you. Does it feel good to win this way?

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September 24, 2024

Dear Minister of Health -

The closure of any consumption and treatment centers would only cause even more difficulties to do with the tragically increasing negative and destructive effects and issues that arise when a lack of support and even the extremely helpful educational benefits provided by the staff who make a larger positive impact on the lives of clients who use these facilities. Not only would shutting CTS down create a problem by forcing those users who are trying to use responsibly, choose to use in public spaces, but the harm prevented by the nurses who educate users how to use without damaging themselves would increase greatly.

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