Scanned & sent to Kathleen & Mary Clare on Dec 09/2016.

Attn: City of Vancouver

December 8, 2016

RE: opening of a combined dispensary and supervised injection site

To Whom It May Concern:

The fentanyl overdose crisis has now become critical and requires a multi-faceted response. Existing efforts have not been successful in reigning in the double-digit annual increases in fentanyl-detected deaths. New supervised injection sites are poised to open in an effort to contain the problem, and this letter is intended to provide you with details about the unique aspects of one such facility. We hope you will read the attached information and provide us with your comments, insights, and recommendations.

The purpose of this letter is to:

1) Introduce ourselves and open a dialogue regarding our plans to open a storefront clinic on E Hastings St that operates both as a dispensary and as a supervised injection site.
2) Provide you with an opportunity to meet with us in person prior to opening on issues relating to municipal regulation, licensing, or access for emergency personnel.
3) Solicit input from relevant city officials and departments on our planned operations using our clinic application form as the discussion document - attached to this letter.

The Vancouver Assisted Consumption Clinic plans to open in the Downtown Eastside in early 2017 as a front line community response initiative that provides evidence-based solutions to the fentanyl overdose crisis. We are committed to the four pillars drug strategy and will make every effort to be a cooperative, respectable and transparent member of the DTES community and OD response effort.

Our operations will be similar to that of Insite and cannabis dispensaries and our goal is to be treated by the city much the same as these organizations are. Our initiative is unique because we will be the first to dispense drugs that are at risk of fentanyl contamination. However, the city has previously demonstrated national leadership in the regulating of cannabis dispensaries, and recognizes the need for more supervised consumption sites. The need for DTES drug users to know what is in the drugs they are consuming has never been greater than now so our company intends to supply a legitimate demand.

For several weeks we have been consulting with local businesses, residents, and DTES services providers allowing for a dialogue on this topic and providing a point person for concerns. We would now like to extend an invitation to any interested parties within the City of Vancouver to meet with us over the next month or so to discuss issues like zoning, security, licensing, facility access, etc.

Our discrete storefront clinic will be located on E Hastings St between Main St and Dunlevy. We have contacted Health Canada and Vancouver Coastal Health regarding the licensing process for new supervised injection facilities and expect to receive authorization in the near future. We encourage you to visit us at assistedconsumption.ca or contact us at 604-817-6961, assistedconsumption@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Scott Gilbert
Director, Vancouver Assisted Consumption Clinic

Declaration of "At-Risk" Status for Accidental Fentanyl-Related Overdose

Background: B.C.'s chief health officer declared a public health emergency after numerous Coroner's Reports showing a sharp increase in the annual rates of drug related overdoses where fentanyl has been detected. Public health officials are issuing regular warnings that fentanyl is being used as a cutting agent in just about every drug on the street including heroin, methamphetamine, crack and cocaine.

This Form: This form is intended for presentation by a DTES drug user to a DTES healthcare or street outreach worker. This form is used to support the user's application for membership at the Vancouver Assisted Consumption Clinic, but does not ensure acceptance. This form is confidential, voluntary and non-binding. You are asked to confirm the following: 1) you know the true identity of the user, 2) you believe the user lives in the DTES or an SRO, 3) you believe the user to be at risk of an accidental fentanyl-related drug overdose. As a condition of acceptance into our program, we assess the risk factors of all applicants to ensure our limited resources are devoted to those most in need.

About Us: The Vancouver Assisted Consumption Clinic (VACC) opens in 2017 on East Hastings St in Vancouver, BC to provide emergency response solutions to DTES drug users – the highest risk population in Canada for ODs. At our clinic, we provide a clean and professional environment where at-risk users can safely and reliably access a supply of street drugs that have been properly tested in a lab environment and shown to be free of fentanyl. All users accepted into our program are required to consume the drugs we provide them inside our facility and under our supervision. Upon request, we also directly assist users with the act of injecting – a practice commonly referred to as "doctoring".

The need for regular lab testing of street-level drugs has been identified as a necessary tool to combat the fentanyl overdose crisis by Health Canada, Vancouver Coastal Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control. To date, our clinic is the first to provide this service in a comprehensive way with GC/MS confirmed samples allowing us to prove the drugs are free of fentanyl. Testing also provides an opportunity to establish a baseline overdose threshold for each opiate user – a number that fluctuates as factors related to tolerance change, but one that barely changes from day-to-day. If the threshold for overdose is accurately known, it can be consciously avoided. The only way to protect users from risk of accidental overdose is by testing for fentanyl, standardizing dosages, and monitoring consumption.

Legal: Similar to cannabis dispensaries and Insite, we operate in a legal grey area. The City of Vancouver has begun regulating dispensaries and formally asked Health Canada to license more Supervised Consumption Sites. After the recent change at the federal level, the director of Health Canada visited Insite and vowed to reduce barriers for others to establish facilities like it. Our clinic has applied for a Health Canada designation and will be transparent and cooperative at the municipal level. This form is not a prescription and does not constitute medical advice, endorsement of any product, or the declaration of any medical benefit. The drug user assumes all risk inherent to drug use.

Declaration: I am currently a healthcare or street outreach worker in Vancouver's downtown east side and I believe _____ to be at an increased risk of accidental fentanyl-related overdose.

By signing this form, you agree that you have read this entire page, reviewed the completion of all required fields on the reverse of this page, and feel comfortable making the above declaration. DATE:_____

Signature: _____ PRINTED name: _____

Employer:_____ Contact info: _____

Application Form – Vancouver Assisted Consumption Clinic (VACC)

This form is required as part of the application to VACC and is for completion by an active drug user with their healthcare or street outreach worker. Our clinic and harm reduction programs are intended to address certain risk factors for drug users in fentanyl-related overdose hotspots. These factors can change over time, so be advised that admission into our program does not ensure continued access to our services. We reserve the right to accept or refuse any application for any reason.

***All fields are mandatory. Information is kept confidential.**

Applicant (drug user) name: _____ _____ Age: _____

Emerg. Contact name: _____ Emerg. contact info: _____

Do you have an Insite handle? Y / N Are you homeless? Y / N Positive? HIV / HepC

List all street and prescription drugs currently being used including tobacco, alcohol and marijuana:

_____

_____

_____

How do you consume your drugs? Circle all that apply: injecting, smoking, snorting, ingesting, other

What at-risk drugs do you use? Circle all that apply: crack, cocaine, heroin, meth, other: _____

On both pages of this form, the following terms are define as:
"user" means the applicant to VACC, a DTES drug user, someone other than the person signing
"street outreach worker" means someone currently employed in a relevant professional position
"contact info" means telephone number or email address, plus street address if possible
"VACC" means Vancouver Assisted Consumption Clinic
"DTES" means Down Town East Side and refers to a region in Vancouver, Canada

All of our products are tested with a full GC/MS test to quantify and precisely measure the ingredients and potency of substances. Knowing the composition and purity of a substance allows for dosages to be standardized and the absence of contaminants ensured – the keys to avoiding accidental overdose. At our East Hastings St clinic we administer standardized dosages in a sterile and controlled environment.

We use only Vanishing Point© syringes, do not allow any drugs to leave our facility, and monitor every user for signs of overdose. These three distinguishing characteristics of our program mean we can ensure there is zero risk of disease transmission for all use at our facility, there is no opportunity for diversion of the drugs from a controlled setting to the black market, and there is a monitoring system in place with staff equipped to reverse the effects of overdose. Most importantly, our program ensures that nobody using our service will die of an accidental fentanyl-related overdose simply for using drugs.

For info call 604-817-6961, email assistedconsumption@gmail.com or visit assistedconsumption.ca
Form developed in consultation with Canadian Harm Reduction Network, VANDU and Pivot Legal

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