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**Sharon Deebrah**

26th March 2024

To the Esteemed Mayor and Honorable Members of London City Council and the CPSC Committee,

Re: Official Communication Regarding Misrepresentation and Misuse of Medical Practising Licenses

This correspondence serves to bring to your attention the concerning matter of misrepresentation and misuse of medical practising licenses by select individuals within our community. It has been brought to my notice that these individuals have been disseminating inaccurate information in support of the utilization of fireworks for cultural events, without duly considering the potential ramifications for public health and safety.

The conduct of these individuals, who are utilizing their medical licenses to influence policies and public sentiment, raises significant apprehensions and may be perceived as unprofessional behavior. By neglecting to engage with pertinent authorities and subject matter experts on issues such as the impact of fireworks on individuals with PTSD, environmental considerations, and the well-being of wildlife and vulnerable populations, they are imperiling public safety and failing to adhere to their ethical obligations as healthcare professionals.

It is strongly advised that the following authorities be promptly notified for the purpose of conducting a thorough investigation into this matter:

1. MPP France Gélinas, Ontario NDP Health Critic
2. Matt Newton Reid, Chair of the Board of Health, London Middlesex Health Unit
3. Dr. Alex Summers, Chief Medical Officer of Health, London Middlesex Health Unit
4. Dr. Andrew Park, President of the Ontario Medical Association and Emergency Doctor in London
5. College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSO) at 1-800-268-7096, ext. 629 for the submission of formal complaints regarding unprofessional conduct
6. Minister of Veterans Affairs

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7. The Senate subcommittee as advisory members of veterans special committee

8. London Fire Chief

It is important to note that as the names are now part of the public record through agenda submissions, the College of Physicians and Surgeons may undertake various actions in response to such complaints, including providing guidance to the doctors, mandating remedial self-study, issuing verbal cautions, or referring the matter to the Ontario Physicians and Surgeons Discipline Tribunal for further scrutiny and potential disciplinary measures.

It is imperative that the Council acts swiftly and diligently to bring this matter to the attention of the aforementioned individuals and entities. We implore the City Council to persist in advocating for the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct within the medical profession.

Furthermore, in response to the recent decision by the CPSC committee concerning the use of fireworks for cultural and religious festivities, it is imperative to address the concerns raised by the Hindu community. The exclusion of Diwali and Chinese New Year from bylaw PW11 should be regarded as a societal shift in sensitivity and awareness. Practices that were deemed acceptable centuries ago may no longer align with contemporary considerations such as climate change and mental health.

I respectfully urge the City Council to take a definitive stance on this matter and acknowledge the contributions of veterans within our county. It is essential to consider environmental factors while making well-informed decisions based on objective data and prudent considerations.

Thank you for your attention to these crucial matters, and we trust that the City Council will act in the best interests of public health, safety, and the veteran community in a manner that upholds the values of integrity and responsibility.

Respectfully,

Sharon Deebrah, MPA (she/her/kwe)

To whom it may concern:

I hereby request that the attached files and forwarded messages be included in the agenda for review, discussion, and consideration in relation to the formulation of policies at the forthcoming council meeting concerning the Fireworks By-law PW11. It is important to note that I authorize the inclusion of my submission (attachments and forwarded emails) in its entirety, without any omissions.

Thank you,  
Sharon Deebrah, MPA (she/her/kwe)

I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territories of the Anishinabewaki, Mississauga and Attiwonderonk Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and the McKee Treaty 2 of 1790. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Sharon Deebrah

**Date:** 15 December 2023 at 10:34:01 pm GMT-5

**To:** [Marty.Deacon@sen.parl.gc.ca](mailto:Marty.Deacon@sen.parl.gc.ca), [H.Yussuff@sen.parl.gc.ca](mailto:H.Yussuff@sen.parl.gc.ca)

**Cc:** "Minister-Ministre (VAC/ACC)" <[minister-ministre@veterans.gc.ca](mailto:minister-ministre@veterans.gc.ca)>

**Subject:** Response required: Veterans Affairs Canada / Anciens Combattants Canada

Dear Members of the Canadian Senate,

I write to you today in support of the recent report titled "The Time is Now: Granting equitable access to psychedelic-assisted therapies." As a concerned citizen, I am deeply alarmed by the high prevalence of suicide and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among Canadian veterans. It is imperative that we take immediate action to address this pressing issue.

The Senate's Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs has rightly called for federal, provincial, and territorial governments to initiate and fund a comprehensive research program on psychedelic-assisted therapy. This approach has shown promising results in treating mental health conditions, including PTSD, and it is crucial that we explore all potential avenues to provide relief and support for our veterans.

However, I would like to draw your attention to a related matter that has received insufficient consideration. Despite the known detrimental effects on veterans, municipalities across Ontario continue to permit the use of fireworks during various festivities. The loud explosions and sudden bursts of light can be extremely triggering for individuals suffering from PTSD. Regrettably, this issue has not been adequately addressed in the research and investigation conducted thus far.

For instance, during Diwali, New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year, and other celebrations, the effects of loud explosions have not been thoroughly examined. Furthermore, high schools in London, Ontario, have been allowed to set off fireworks during graduation ceremonies. This insensitivity in policy-making fails to take into account the challenging environment that veterans are forced to return to.

It is worth noting that refugees from war zones, who have also experienced the traumatic effects of loud explosions, are now residing in our country. By permitting fireworks, we are subjecting them to triggers that can exacerbate their already fragile mental states. As a nation that prides itself on compassion and inclusivity, it is disheartening to witness such disregard for the well-being of these vulnerable populations.

Moreover, environmentalists have provided substantial evidence of the harmful effects of fireworks on the environment, including toxic waste and the disruption of wildlife. Despite these findings, municipal, federal, and provincial politicians have been reluctant to consider alternatives, such as laser light shows, which could provide equally captivating displays without the negative impact on veterans and the environment.

In light of these concerns, I implore you, esteemed Senators, to take immediate action. It is our duty to advocate for the well-being of our veterans and to create an environment that is supportive and understanding of their unique challenges. I urge you to consider the recommendations put forth in the report and to prioritize the funding and implementation of a large-scale research program on psychedelic-assisted therapy.

Let us not forget the sacrifices made by our veterans and the responsibility we have to ensure their successful reintegration into society. By addressing the issue of fireworks and exploring alternative options, we can demonstrate our commitment to their well-being and create a more inclusive and empathetic Canada.

I give permission to share my email with members of the committee and thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Sharon Deebrah

Attach: email from Minister of Veterans Affairs

I acknowledge that I live and work in on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay-wuk) and Chonnonton (Chun-ongk-ton) Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenousaunee, Lunaapeewak, and Attawandaron peoples

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Minister-Ministre (VAC/ACC)" <[minister-ministre@veterans.gc.ca](mailto:minister-ministre@veterans.gc.ca)>

**Date:** 25 October 2023 at 10:40:38 am GMT-4

**To:** Sharon Deebrah

**Subject:** Veterans Affairs Canada / Anciens Combattants Canada

Ms. Sharon Deebrah

Dear Ms. Deebrah:

Thank you for your emails regarding your support for a motion presented to London City Council to ban fireworks.

All Canadians owe a debt of gratitude to the courageous individuals who have served our country through times of war, armed conflict and peace, and Veterans Affairs Canada is committed to offering the best possible care and benefits to our Veterans.

It is possible that Veterans, regardless of whether they suffer from an operational stress injury (OSI) such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or not, become triggered by the sounds, shockwaves and smells of fireworks. As you so rightly mentioned, this has the potential to result in strong physiological and emotional responses which can lead to intense anxiety, fear and stress for the Veteran.

Regardless of the cause, we know that certain events, noises and scents can be triggering for our Veterans and former members of the RCMP. This is why we work hard to promote the resources and supports that are available to Veterans should such events cause them distress.

Veterans Affairs Canada is determined to ensure that eligible Veterans have access to the mental health support they need, when and where they need it, through a range of benefits and services, and we would be pleased to have this information circulated to residents of London, Ontario.

To start, eligible Veterans receive coverage to access treatment by a private health practitioner—such as a licensed psychologist—of their choice. Currently, over 12,000 mental health care providers are registered with the Department.

Through our new [Mental Health Benefits](#) introduced in April 2022, Veterans will automatically have up to two years of treatment coverage for service-related conditions

such as anxiety, depressive, and trauma-and-stressor-related disorders until a decision on their disability application is reached.

As well, through the [Operational Stress Injury Social Support](#) program, Veterans and their families can receive confidential support from trained peers who themselves have dealt with an OSI and lived through similar experiences. Active and former members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP also have access to 21 OSI Clinics located across the country. The clinics are staffed by interdisciplinary teams of health professionals who provide specialized assessment and treatment services for OSIs.

Veterans Affairs Canada has also partnered with the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group to create the [Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families](#). Through this virtual centre, researchers can connect, develop tools to better assess and treat military personnel and Veterans affected by OSIs, and share knowledge and best practices with health care providers across the country.

Additionally, we have teamed up with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to develop Mental Health First Aid training for Veterans and their families. Participants learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of common mental health disorders, how to provide immediate aid to someone in crisis and where to access appropriate treatment. Two self-help applications—[PTSD Coach Canada](#) and [OSI Connect](#)—have also been created specifically for Canadian military personnel and Veterans. And, because Veterans Affairs Canada recognizes the needs of military families who play a vital role in supporting and caring for ill and injured Veterans, the Department sponsors two free online resources—[Caregiver Zone](#) and [OSI Resource for Caregivers](#)—which are especially designed to help caregivers support their loved ones and look after their own needs.

No Veteran should have to suffer alone. For immediate support, Veterans, their families and their caregivers can call the [VAC Assistance Service](#) (1-800-268-7708, toll-free) to receive counselling and referrals for personal concerns affecting their well-being. This confidential service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and is delivered by a nationwide team of mental health professionals. There is no eligibility requirement or cost.

I encourage you to visit the Department's website ([www.veterans.gc.ca](http://www.veterans.gc.ca)) for updates on the positive changes we are making in the lives of Veterans and their families.

Again, thank you for writing and for your advocacy for the well-being of Canada's cherished Veterans.

Sincerely,  
The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, PC, MP