

March 16, 2012

Re: Methadone Clinics Report and By-Law

To: Mayor Joe Fontana,
Councillor Bud Polhill
Councillor Bill Armstrong
Councillor Joe Swan
Councillor Stephen Orser
Councillor Joni Baechler
Councillor Nancy Branscombe
Councillor Matt Brown

Councillor Paul Hubert
Councillor Dale Henderson
Councillor Paul Van Meerbergen
Councillor Denise Brown
Councillor Harold Usher
Councillor Judy Bryant
Councillor Sandy White

This letter pertains to the upcoming City Council meeting on March 20th 2012 at which you will receive report on the methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) report and proposed by-law. We would like to thank City staff for the time and effort put into this project. As the London Homeless Coalition, many of the Londoners we work with are experiencing an addiction or in recovery from an addiction. As noted in your background documents, methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) is an important piece in the spectrum of recovery services for addictions. We are pleased to see that access to treatment will continue to be one of the priorities. We would also suggest that looking at the broader context of addictions, with the change from oxycontin to oxyNEO, and the introduction of Bill 101 (responsible prescription), prescription narcotics will be much harder to access, and the number of people considering MMT will increase significantly.

Our primary concern with the report, and in particular the proposed by-law, is the over-arching concept of having special zoning related to this particular medical service. As highlighted by the Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the risk in this case is of “discrimination in services against people with disabilities, including addictions.” It is our feeling that this concern is best highlighted in the recommendation for public consultation on site planning for new clinics. If a psychiatrist, physiotherapist, or other health profession was to propose a clinic in one of the 824 zoned sites; they would not have to go through this process. This added process might then limit accessibility to one particular form of medical treatment. We ask that you would consider seriously the concerns of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and re-evaluate the approach to this by-law.

Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

London Homeless Coalition

Cc/ Cathy Saunders, City Clerk