

Committee: **Middlesex-London Health Unit Board of Health**

Organization/Sector represented:

Name: **Deana Ruston**

Occupation:

Work experience: **I have been advocating for harm reduction, the need for a Temporary Overdose Prevention Site and permanent supervised consumption facilities for beyond the last year at all levels of government- municipal, provincial and federal as well as educating the general public on the need for these services and working with the many partners at the table working to make these services a reality- namely the Middlesex-London Health Unit and Regional HIV/ AIDS Connection. I also share my living and lived experience struggles with mental illnesses and addiction.**

Education: **Bachelor of Arts in Thanatology (Grief Counselling) and Certificate in Loss, Grief & Bereavement from King's University College at Western University - Candidate of the First Responder Trauma Prevention & Recovery Program with Simon Fraser**

University focusing on first responder mental health and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Skills: **I have a vast and growing interest in public health. I have extensive knowledge on London's Temporary Overdose Prevention Site, the need for supervised consumption facilities and knowledge and experience of advocating within all three levels of government- municipal, provincial and federal.**

Interest reason: **I wish to continue to drive the Middlesex-London Health Unit forward as part of the Board of Health. As the Middlesex-London Health Unit is the largest independent health unit in the country, it is crucial that our programs and services reflect the diversity and needs of our region. I wish to continue to push this forward and ensure that fresh new ideas are brought forward.**

Contributions: **I believe I can bring a young adult's point of view to the Board of Health. As an alumni of King's University College at Western University and Western University it is vital that our services are reflective of the large student population that the London region is home to- through Fanshawe College, Western University, the affiliate colleges at Western among other academic and learning institutions within our region. Additionally, I can also bring forward a living and lived experience of mental health and addictions to the Board of Health helping to ensure that programs, services, policies and decisions are reflective of the community that we serve.**

Past contributions: **I am a member of the following: -MP Peter Fragiskatos' Youth Council since October 2016, - the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Youth Action Council - the Young Canadians Roundtable on Health with The Sandbox Project and - the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario Youth Council**

Interpersonal: **Vast experience in sharing my views with others as well as listening to, and respecting the views of others. Over the past year and several months, I have been advocating in the community and beyond in regards to the need for a Temporary Overdose Prevention Site, and the need for supervised consumption and permanent supervised consumption facilities within our community. This advocacy has led me to hear from many different people of all different skills, knowledge levels, backgrounds, and abilities with regards to this. I have listened to their questions, and concerns and have shared with them my views while respecting theirs. This has been and continues to be a controversial topic but in the end is a misunderstood health and social service.**

Interview interest: **Yes**