



# PROVINCE APPROVES PERMANENT SITE FOR CONSUMPTION AND TREATMENT SERVICE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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London, ON – The Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) and Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (RHAC) have been notified that the Government of Ontario has approved the application for a permanent Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS) in London, at 446 York Street. The announcement includes funding to pay for renovations at the site and to undertake operations once the facility is ready to receive patients. Construction is expected to begin in Spring 2021.

Provincial approval of the proposed site, confirmation of funding and the required federal exemption under section 56.1 of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* were the final steps in the process that began in 2018 to establish a permanent CTS and provide services where they are needed most. Once complete, the facility will allow clients to consume pre-obtained drugs under medical supervision and have access to additional services, including treatment and counselling programs.

“This is a landmark moment for London. These facilities have repeatedly been proven to not only save lives, they also improve lives by providing women and men with the necessary resources and supports to pursue recovery, independence, and fulfillment. This success simply would not have been possible without unprecedented coordination, collaboration, and cooperation across numerous local agencies. We must also acknowledge and give thanks to our federal and provincial partners for the important roles they’ve played in arriving at this critical juncture.” says Mayor Ed Holder.

“Opioid deaths were at epidemic levels before the pandemic, and have skyrocketed since. Today’s announcement is the result of so much hard work by so many people, from the thousands who participated in community consultations to the dozens and dozens who wrote letters of support. Thank you! All of your hard work has paid off, and will result in lives being saved.” says Dr. Chris Mackie, Medical Officer of Health with the Middlesex-London Health Unit.

“We commend Mayor Holder and Minister Elliot for their leadership in approving the permanent home for this life saving service. With this critical step finalized, we look forward to working with our health and social service partners to deliver enhanced wraparound services out of the permanent site,” says Scott Courtice, Executive Director, London Intercommunity Health Centre.

RHAC is the primary program operator of Carepoint. RHAC works collaboratively with London Intercommunity Health Center (LIHC) to support medical components of the service, with MLHU recognized as a vital founding partner and ongoing champion of this local public health initiative.

Since opening at its temporary site at 186 King Street, the skilled and caring staff of London's temporary CTS have prevented more than 295 potential opioid-related deaths, supported close to 48,500 visits and facilitated hundreds and hundreds of referrals to a range of services including: addictions treatment and counselling, primary care, HIV/HCV testing and related clinical care, system navigation, detox services, housing and other vital social services.

"Today marks the culmination of a dream that has been in the works for months. Carepoint and RHAC will be able to grow and enhance the services that many people in our community have come to rely upon," says Brian Lester, Executive Director at Regional HIV / AIDS Connection. "We have developed relationships with many of the people who live and struggle with the challenges of addiction every day. Today's announcement brings added hope for a brighter tomorrow and the knowledge for so many people that their lives matter."

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