



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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March 6, 2008

The Honourable Tony Clement  
Minister of Health  
278 Confederation Building  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

I am writing further to recent discussions with your officials and in light of the current situation regarding drug addiction on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

In October, your government announced plans to invest \$64 million in new funding for a National Anti-drug Strategy to promote prevention and innovative new treatment options. Subsequently, we have confirmed your department's intention to allocate at least \$10 million of the national fund to Vancouver in recognition of the fact that this issue is national in its scope. People from all over Canada are in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

In light of the fact that the administration of health care is a provincial responsibility under the Constitution - and given that the City of Vancouver has demonstrated leadership in working to address this problem - I am asking you to make those funds available to the provincial health department on an urgent basis for the following two priorities:

- the development of a Centre for Severe Addictions and Concurrent Disorders at the University of British Columbia to enhance clinical and innovative treatment services; and
- the development of Assertive Community Treatment which involves 24/7 multi-disciplinary teams with high staff to client ratios to support clients in their transition to housing and engagement with ongoing services.

I also want to restate our government's support for your renewed focus on prevention. On March 26, I will be hosting a special meeting of Vancouver's Four Pillars Coalition that will focus on prevention. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you and your officials to attend this session.

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At the same time, I am asking you to consider using some of the prevention funds you have identified in the Anti-drug Strategy to initiate a partnership with the Vancouver School Board aimed at youth outreach. Our School Board Chair Clarence Hansen and his team would be very eager to participate in such a partnership and I would be pleased to help facilitate any partnership opportunities.

With the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games only two years away, we need to address the problems of drug addiction and mental illness on the Downtown Eastside. While much progress is being made between the City of Vancouver and Province of British Columbia, we need leadership from the federal government.

We welcome your government's commitment in October to work with us to help get people off drugs. Now we need to move the funds you have identified for Vancouver out of Ottawa and onto the street so we can make a positive impact on people's lives - particularly those suffering from the dual disorders of mental illness and drug addiction.

In addition to improving the quality of life for all our residents, these measures will also help us reduce crime and public disorder.

Our staff will be in touch with your officials in the coming days to accelerate our discussions with a view to implementing the plan we have identified in this letter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sam Sullivan  
MAYOR

cc: The Honourable George Abbott, Minister of Health  
The Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety  
Dr. Stephen Toope, President, UBC  
Clarence Hansen, Chair, Vancouver School Board  
Chief Constable Jim Chu, Vancouver Police Department  
Geoff Plant, Civil City Commissioner  
Judy Rogers, City Manager