



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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March 17, 2021

Transmitted via email: [patty.hajdu@parl.gc.ca](mailto:patty.hajdu@parl.gc.ca)

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C. M.P.  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

### RE: Opioid Crisis and Call for Overdose Action Plan

Dear Minister,

The City of Prince George Council and Staff have taken part in conversations with many stakeholders across our community regarding the impact of the opioid crisis on local health and policing resources. We acknowledge the steps taken by the Government of Canada thus far in addressing the need to improve access to treatment and harm reduction services, legal protection for individuals seeking emergency services during an overdose by way of the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act, awareness and prevention around the use of opioids, and the continued work to reduce the illegal and often tainted opioid supply.

To further support the country's effort in addressing the opioid crisis, the City of Prince George calls upon the Government of Canada to further its work through the implementation of a National Overdose Action Plan. As such, the City supports the following resolution shared by other municipal councils across the province:

*WHEREAS the opioid crisis is one of the largest public health emergencies of our lifetime, with a death about every two hours on average and a death toll of over 16,360 since 2016 (January 2016 to March 2020);*

*AND WHEREAS other countries have significantly reduced drug-related fatalities with reforms such as legal regulation of illicit drugs to ensure safe supply and decriminalization for personal use;*

*AND WHEREAS the federal government has indicated it is premature to discuss these measures until there are comprehensive supports for people to get well;*

*AND WHEREAS supports are needed, but measures that save lives are essential if people are to survive and access supports;*

*AND WHEREAS the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has stated that they agree the evidence suggests “decriminalization for simple possession as an effective way to reduce the public health and public safety harms associated with substance use”;*

*AND WHEREAS the overdose crisis rages, showing few signs of abating;*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council:*

- a) request that the Government of Canada:
  - i) declare the overdose crisis a national public health; and*
  - ii) immediately seek input from the people most affected by this crisis and meet with provinces and territories to develop a comprehensive, Pan-Canadian overdose action plan, which includes comprehensive supports and full consideration of reforms that other countries have used to significantly reduce drug-related fatalities and stigma.**

On behalf of Council, thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Mayor Lyn Hall  
City of Prince George

cc: All UBCM Member Local Governments  
Todd Doherty, MP for Cariboo-Prince George  
Bob Zimmer, MP for Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies