

The Right Reverend
ANDREW J. ASBIL

Bishop of Toronto



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

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March 17, 2026

Hon. Doug Ford, MPP, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Sylvia Jones, MPP, Minister of Health & Deputy Premier
Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam, MPP, Associate Minister of Mental Health & Addictions

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Jones, and Minister Thanigasalam,

It is devastating to learn the news that provincial funding for all supervised consumption sites in the province of Ontario will end.

Since the closure of nine provincially-funded sites last year under the *Community Care and Recovery Act, 2024*, we have seen the fallout in our communities: increased public drug use and discarded needles, more overdoses at church- and community centre-run drop-ins, and a sharp increase in the number of paramedic calls to deal with suspected overdoses. In Toronto alone, the number of overdose-related paramedic calls in January 2026 was up nearly 50% from the previous year. The increasing contamination of street drugs with veterinary tranquilizers such as medetomidine, which is not responsive to naloxone, produces overdoses that require more support than community agencies can offer. Supervised consumption sites provided drug-checking services as well as trained staff and equipment able to respond to such overdoses. Without them, these overdose cases must be referred to paramedics and emergency rooms. Not only does this cost taxpayers more, but it also contributes to increased delay and emergency room wait times, putting the health of all Ontarians at risk.

The province's transition to the HART hub model, which began last spring, was meant to connect people who use drugs with greater access to treatment and supportive housing. Those who work on the frontlines, in drop-ins, emergency rooms, and the few remaining supervised consumption sites, tell us a different story. These promised resources have not materialized. There are still not enough publicly funded treatment services and supportive housing available for those who want and need them. In their absence, people continue to use street drugs and to remain homeless, with even less chance of finding housing and greater risk of criminalization, thanks to Bills 10 and 6. Keeping actual and suspected drug users homeless and increasing their likelihood of incarceration will not solve either the overdose crisis nor the housing crisis, and enforcement and incarceration cost still more than harm reduction, treatment, and supportive housing.

In December 2024 Ontario's Auditor-General released a report criticizing this government for failing to provide an evidence-based case analysis for the proposed HART hub model, and for failing to mitigate the adverse impacts which will result from closing supervised consumption sites. We are deeply grieved that, rather than address these adverse impacts, this government has doubled down and will now be closing the remaining seven publicly-funded supervised consumption sites in the province.

We maintain that supervised consumption sites are an important part of an overall public health response to the opioid crisis. They contribute to public health by reducing public drug use and the transmission of HIV, Hepatitis C, and other blood-borne diseases. Not only do they reverse overdoses without putting additional burdens on emergency services, they provide a place where people who use drugs can access other supports without stigma, helping them get

to a place where they can choose recovery or at the very least reduce their drug use and other risky behaviours. There is no path to recovery without meeting people where they are.

Anglicans all over our Diocese agree. Last year, over 65% of parishes in our Diocese passed resolutions urging this government to reverse the planned closure of supervised consumption sites and to lift the ban on new sites. We cannot stand by and watch the remainder of these sites – the last lifeline available to many in our communities – be stripped away.

We urge you to reconsider and maintain provincial funding for existing supervised consumption sites, and to allow the opening of new sites in communities experiencing high volumes of drug overdoses. We would be grateful for any opportunity to meet with you further on this issue.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Andrew Toronto". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Right Reverend Andrew J. Asbil
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cc. Elin Goulden, Social Justice & Advocacy Consultant, Diocese of Toronto