

# Statement Déclaration

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For immediate release

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## **STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE PASSAGE OF BILL C-2, THE SO-CALLED *RESPECT FOR COMMUNITIES ACT***

**June 9, 2015** — We, the undersigned, firmly believe that today's anticipated Senate passage of Bill C-2, the so-called *Respect for Communities Act*, undermines the rights of people who use drugs to access life-saving and health-protecting services.

Human rights and scientific evidence should be at the foundation of policy that protects the health and well-being of our communities. However, Bill C-2 will put the lives of these vulnerable Canadians at risk by establishing excessive and unreasonable requirements for health authorities and community agencies looking to open or continue operating supervised consumption services (SCS) for people who use drugs.

This bill changes Section 56 of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, establishing 26 new requirements applicants must meet before the federal Minister of Health will even consider an approval to operate a SCS.

The harmful consequences of Bill C-2 will be felt most deeply by the most vulnerable members of our communities. The barriers this bill, now poised to become law, presents to accessing SCS allow a public health emergency to persist under a law-and-order agenda, and exposes patients and communities to infection, suffering and death.

The scientific evidence demonstrates that when people have access to supervised consumption services, lives are saved. They reduce the risks of transmission of infectious diseases and overdose-related deaths. The Supreme Court of Canada has recognized that preventing access to such critical health services violates the constitutional rights of people who use drugs.

We strongly oppose the new legislation. We need new SCS, not additional barriers. Our government must increase access to evidence-based prevention, harm reduction and treatment services in Canada. Lives are at stake.

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**List of signatories:**

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Association of Ontario Health Centres  
Association pour la défense des droits et l'inclusion des consommateurs de drogues du Québec (ADDICQ)  
Association québécoise pour la promotion de la santé des personnes utilisatrices de drogues  
BC Association of People on Methadone  
BC Centre for Disease Control  
BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS  
BC/Yukon Association of Drug War Survivors  
Blood Ties Four Directions Centre (Whitehorse)  
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Canadian Association of Nurses in HIV/AIDS Care (CANAC)  
Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs (CAPUD)  
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Canadian Public Health Association  
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