

January 29, 2007

The Honourable Stéphane Dion, PC, MP
Leader of the Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6



Dear Mr. Dion:

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network is Canada's leading advocacy organization working on the legal and human rights issues raised by HIV/AIDS. On behalf of our more than 200 members, including front-line AIDS service organizations and people living with HIV/AIDS, I am writing to applaud your recent statements supporting supervised injection sites.

As you know, extensive research clearly demonstrates that Insite, Vancouver's supervised injection facility, has lowered the rates of syringe-sharing, deaths from overdoses, and HIV and hepatitis C infection, while increasing the chances of directing drug users to addiction treatment services. The evidence has been published in leading medical journals, including the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (CMAJ), *New England Journal of Medicine* and *The Lancet*. Insite has earned the support of the Vancouver Police Department, local residents and business groups, the City of Vancouver, and scientists and AIDS experts from across the country and around the world.

The facts speak for themselves — yet Insite's future remains uncertain. Discontinuing this remarkable service would be a huge step backward for Canada's response to HIV/AIDS. Insite has proved that supervised injection facilities are effective and essential in fighting HIV/AIDS, minimizing the harms of drug use, and fulfilling the right to health of some of the community's most disadvantaged people. People who use drugs have a human right to the highest attainable standard of health services and goods, and Insite is an example of moving toward the realization of this right.

I urge you and your caucus to continue to stand up and speak out for Insite. Canadians deserve to know how successful it is and why maintaining and expanding safe injection sites is good public policy based on sound scientific evidence.

Sincerely,

Joanne Csete
Executive Director

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



CHEF DE L'OPPOSITION

Le 30 mars 2007

Madame Joanne Csete
Directrice générale
Réseau juridique canadien VIH/sida
1240, rue Bay, bureau 600
Toronto (Ontario)
M5R 2A7

Madame Csete,

J'ai bien reçu votre lettre du 29 janvier me félicitant pour mes récentes déclarations à l'appui des sites d'injection supervisés. Je regrette d'avoir tardé à vous répondre.

Je crois fermement que nous avons un devoir moral comme Canadiens de faire tout ce qui est en notre pouvoir pour venir en aide aux personnes atteintes du sida et à celles qui font usage de drogues. Je partage votre conviction que les sites d'injection supervisés, comme celui de Vancouver, sont essentiels à la lutte au VIH/sida et à la réalisation du droit à la santé de certaines personnes les plus démunies de la communauté.

Comme les recherches ont démontré que le centre d'injection sécuritaire à Vancouver a contribué à diminuer la propagation du sida parmi les toxicomanes, je suis déçu que le gouvernement minoritaire conservateur ait refusé de renouveler le financement de ce programme.

Soyez assurée que l'Opposition officielle continuera d'affirmer son appui pour le centre d'injection sécuritaire à Vancouver.

Veuillez agréer, Madame, l'expression de mes sentiments les meilleurs.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Stéphane Dion', is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

L'honorable Stéphane Dion, C.P., député
Chef de l'Opposition officielle
Chef du Parti libéral du Canada