



April 27th, 2017

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, M.P.P., Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Dear Ms. Wynne:

Re: Request for Provincial Support: Opioid Strategy

At the regular session of Lanark County Council held on April 26th, 2017, the Council of the Corporation of the County of Lanark adopted the following resolution seeking provincial support in relation to the opioid crisis:

MOTION #CC-2017-67

WHEREAS, communities across the province and country are responding to the escalating risk of opioid overdoses and deaths;

AND WHEREAS, Ontario alone has witnessed 13 years of increasing deaths due to opioid overdoses, to the point that deaths related to such overdoses are now double those from motor vehicle collisions (*excerpt from Prescription for Life www.drugstrategy.com*);

AND WHEREAS, according to the Regional Supervising Coroner East Region, Leeds, Grenville and Lanark (LGL), our region is not immune to the opioid problem, as there were 24 opioid related deaths between 2010 and 2014, as well as 7 suspected opioid-related deaths in the region in the past 12 months, and individuals participating in the Public Health Unit Harm Reduction Program have reported 23 non-fatal opioid related overdoses in the past 6 months;

AND WHEREAS, opioids, such as morphine and fentanyl patches, are prescribed by physicians to treat pain;



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AND WHEREAS, fentanyl patches and other opioid pills are being diverted from their initial purpose, and are being sold illicitly to be smoked, chewed, ingested or injected for a high, which over time, requires more and more opioid to get the same high, which leads to overdose and potentially death;

AND WHEREAS, a particular concern with fentanyl patches, including illicit fentanyl and its related analogues, is that these drugs are available and easily imported illegally from other countries, and the amount of fentanyl varies on each portion of the patch leading to a higher risk of overdose;

AND WHEREAS, illicit fentanyl has been confirmed in many other street drugs such as heroin, fake oxycontin pills, cocaine, and crystal meth;

AND WHEREAS, police in our area have reported seizing diverted fentanyl (an opioid) patches, illicit fentanyl, and drugs laced with fentanyl;

AND WHEREAS, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is working with the community to develop a community response plan to the opioid situation in collaboration with many stakeholders including police, fire, EMS, community organizations, municipalities, health service providers, and the education sector;

AND WHEREAS, the Health Unit has the lead in expanding surveillance of the problem, ensuring individuals who are using opioids and their family/friends have access to naloxone which can reverse respiratory failure from an overdose, and providing information and education to the public, in addition to working with municipalities and the community on the social determinants of health such as poverty, unemployment, lack of social supports, and inadequate housing, that can have a negative impact on the health of individuals and communities, as well as address the underlying root causes of substance misuse;

AND WHEREAS, in October of 2016, the Honourable Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Dr. Eric Hoskins announced the Ontario Provincial Opioid Strategy to tackle the public health crisis related to problematic use of opioids by looking at multiple sectors including physician prescribing, overdose monitoring, opioid prescription monitoring, and enhancing harm reduction and addiction services.



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NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Council of the Corporation of the County of Lanark respectfully requests the provincial government to enhance our local response to the opioid problem in our community, by enacting the following:

- Ensure all first responders, including police and fire, have access to provincially funded naloxone that can reverse an opioid overdose, and training in its use, due to the fact that in our rural region volunteer firefighters are often the first ones on the scene of an opioid overdose, and it is critical that the individual(s) who has overdosed receive naloxone as soon as possible to prevent death; and
- Ensure all places that support vulnerable people in the community, have access to publicly funded naloxone, and training in its use; and
- Provide a provincially funded public opioid education campaign, including social media to complement the efforts of individual communities; and
- Provide additional provincial funding for addiction and mental health services that would assist in treating people with mental illness to reduce and/or eliminate self-medication with opioids, and would provide addiction services to help people overcome their opioid addiction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington MP Scott Reid and MPP Randy Hillier, Carleton-Mississippi Mills MPP Jack MacLaren, FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities), AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario) and all municipalities in the Province of Ontario.

Honourable Premier, this is a crisis situation and we need strong leadership from the provincial and federal governments to coordinate with communities and urgently invest in the solutions to stop the epidemic, including addictions treatment, supportive housing, prevention and drug policy reform. We desperately need a nationwide emergency response as opioid addiction devastates families and communities and overdose deaths reach an even more horrific toll. We very much look forward to a favourable response.

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If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Leslie Drynan, County Clerk/Deputy CAO at 613-267-4200 ext. 1502 or via email at ldrynan@lanarkcounty.ca or Dr. Paula Stewart MD, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer for Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit (LGLDHU) at 613-345-5685.

Sincere regards,

Bill Dobson
Warden

BD/ld

cc:

Honourable Minister Dr. Eric Hoskins, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington MP Scott Reid and MPP Randy Hillier
Carleton-Mississippi Mills MPP Jack MacLaren
FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities)
AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario)
EOWC (Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus)
All municipalities in the Province of Ontario
Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health for LGLDHU