

National dialogue addresses integration of supervised injection services into health care and community in Canada

April 19, 2012 - Montreal - Thought leaders and health care professionals gathered in Montreal today to convene a [national dialogue](#) on the future of supervised injections services in Canada. The special event took place as part of the 21st annual [Canadian Conference on HIV/AIDS Research](#).

Following Canada's [Supreme Court decision](#) to allow Insite, a supervised injection site located in Vancouver, B.C. to remain open, other Canadian communities have begun to discuss how best to integrate supervised injection services into health care. Speakers at today's event focused on what could be learned from the experiences of Vancouver and other communities around the world.

"Supervised injection services have been integrated into mental health and addiction services for over 25 years in some European countries with good results for both individuals with serious drug problems and local communities. The Canadian experience clearly supports the position that supervised injection plays a critical role within a comprehensive approach to improving community health and safety," said Donald MacPherson, Director of the [Canadian Drug Policy Coalition](#), co-host of today's event.

"One of the key elements of the Supreme Court decision is its recognition of access to health services specifically designed to address the needs of injection drug users (IDU). As a result, the highest court in the country recognizes the critical and necessary work of the community organizations that IDUs depend on," said Louis Letellier de St. Just, Lawyer and founding member, CACTUS MONTREAL, also co-host of today's event.

The [Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation](#) also co-hosted today's event and spoke about their experience operating the Dr. Peter Centre in Vancouver, an HIV/AIDS health care facility that integrated supervised injection services into its broad range of health care services ten years ago.

"Nurses at Vancouver's Dr. Peter Centre have been supervising injections for 10 years. Simply put-supervising injections is part of nursing practice. The Supreme Court upheld that supervising injections is a health care service. Now, health care leaders need to make it possible for nurses to do their job. And, our two professional pillars of citizen support - law enforcement and nursing need to work together so they can each carry out their professional responsibilities," said Maxine Davis, Executive Director of the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation.

A diversity of speakers contributed to today's dialogue including public health officials, municipal, provincial, and federal politicians, law enforcement, community organizations, health care professionals, drug user groups, and citizen organizations.

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