



Date: April 25, 2025
To: Hamilton Public Health Sub-Committee
From: Paul Takala, CEO/Chief Librarian
Gagan Batra, Chair, Hamilton Public Library Board
Subject: **Petition Designating HPL Locations Safe Consumption Sites**

We have been notified that a [Community-Initiated Petition](#) is requesting Sub-Committee Members to consider supporting the designation of some Library branches as Safe Drug Consumption Sites. The petition is not proposed by, nor is it the direction of the Hamilton Public Library.

As we mentioned in a recent The Spectator Letter to the Editor, we understand that social service agencies are stretched thin, and people are experiencing complex challenges. Library Staff work daily to provide effective library service and ensure the well-being of our community members to the best of our ability.

As we continue our work to provide residents with quality library service and advance positive social connections, we need to ensure our spaces serve as safe community spaces for everyone. The petition's proposed service would likely negatively impact on our ability to provide library services, particularly our work to support families grow the next generation of readers. This statement is based on usage trends we have already seen at the Central Library, which has been most impacted by the opioid crisis. At Central Library, children's book and other youth material borrowing was down 62% in 2024 compared to 2019.

We continue to look for new resources and approaches to better support residents, and we join the Canadian public library sector in advocating higher levels of government to appropriately fund community mental health and addiction services to ensure critical community services are available to those in need.

While we appreciate the community proposing action on this need, the Library cannot serve as Safe Drug Consumption Sites. We will work with our City and community partners to support Public Health and agency response as we continue to serve the community as a Library.

We remain committed to serving our community to the best of our ability, supporting learners and offering everyone a place where they can belong. The invitation to belong is open to everyone who respects that their actions should not undermine the ability of others, including families with children, to positively experience their community and Library.