

NSSCM POSITION STATEMENT



	Supervised Drug Consumption Sites and InSite program
Date Submitted to NSSCM Council	April 7 2009 Version 2 submitted May 27 2009
Sponsor	Paul Hasselback on behalf of the External Communications & Advocacy Committee
Date Presented to Membership	June 7 2009 AGM
Date Approved by Council	
Purpose	To promote inclusion of supervised drug consumption sites as an important component of comprehensive public health services for individuals with substance abuse disorders
Rationale	<p>The safer consumption of drugs has become an issue of conflict between values. Public health proponents justifiably argue that such services are a health service designed to reduce morbidity and mortality amongst those persons who utilize non-prescribed drugs. Such a position has been supported by the decision of the BC Supreme Court. Conversely there are those that continue to express concerns about the societal messages associated with the appearance of supposedly supporting illicit drug use and the negative impacts on local communities that suggest such services attract individuals to specific neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Despite the Expert Advisory Committee report, an evidence review of supervised drug consumption sites and the decision of the BC Supreme Court, the necessary regulatory changes to the Canadian <i>Controlled Drugs and Substances Act</i> have not been addressed and the current Federal government has challenged the decision of the BC Supreme Court. The debate has the potential negative consequence of delaying implementation of needed programs in Canadian communities to address addiction issues.</p> <p>To this effect, the Vancouver InSite supervised injection site was established with rigorous evaluation of the range of potential positive and negative impacts. The Expert Advisory Committee established by the Federal Government to review the site found 13 of 17 criteria supported InSite, 3 demonstrated no harm, and for one the evidence was inconclusive.</p> <p>Numerous Canadian health organizations have developed positions of support for InSite or supervised injection sites, including CPHA, CMA, and several provincial public health organizations.</p>

	<p>The position statement recognizes that supervised drug consumption is one of many harm reduction strategies to address addictions issues. The statement does not address closely related issues such as methadone prescribing or the dispensing of opiates to addicted persons without supervision of their consumption.</p>
Scope	<p>Community Medicine Specialists and the broader Public Health communities and stakeholders</p>
Text of Position Statement	<p>The National Specialty Society of Community Medicine (NSSCM) supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inclusion of supervised drug consumption sites as a component of comprehensive public health services for individuals with substance abuse disorders, and ▪ That InSite remain open and continue to be adequately funded to provide comprehensive addiction services (including supervised injection, counseling, detoxification and rehabilitation) as well as research and evaluation, and ▪ That Canadian communities should respond to the public health problem of addiction by employing harm reduction interventions such as supervised consumption of drugs by injection, inhalation, or other means as a component of a comprehensive approach to addictions, ▪ That decisions of how and when to incorporate safer drug consumption sites should be based on evidence of effectiveness and local need, and ▪ That the Controlled Drugs and Substance Act be amended to address the questions of ambiguity so that supervision of consumption of illicit drugs is considered a legal public health service