



June 02, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

I am the Executive Director for Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County, our community's child welfare organization. I am writing this letter to support CMHA's concerns regarding a cannabis retailer potentially being located beside the new location for their child and youth mental health program as well as a new youth hub.

Many, many vulnerable children and youth will be utilizing the services and supports that will be provided at this location and having a cannabis retailer located so close may prove difficult, particularly for those youth struggle with addiction issues. The current legislation, subsection 17(6) of The Cannabis Act and Cannabis Regulations states that:

"It is prohibited to promote cannabis, a cannabis accessory or a service related to cannabis under subsection 17(6) of the *Cannabis Act* by displaying a brand element of cannabis, of a cannabis accessory or of a service related to cannabis on any thing that is in a school, a public playground, a daycare facility or any other public place frequented mainly by young persons or that is visible from such a place. (section 104.19 of the *Cannabis Regulations*)"

While cannabis is now legal, it is not legal for youth, and can have serious and lasting repercussions for youth and young adults, particularly those with mental health and addiction issues. It has been widely reported that youth using cannabis are at a heightened risk of developing psychosis and schizophrenia and that consistent use results in worse prognosis, more severe symptoms and increased relapse. As well, research has shown that use by adolescents before their brain is fully developed, has been linked to additional health problems such as use of other substances, increased anxiety and depression, poor educational outcomes and other problems.

While the location of a cannabis retailer cannot ensure that youth won't frequent such businesses, having one next door to a place that they frequent often to receive the much-needed help and support they seek is bound to have an impact. It would be akin to an alcoholic attending an AA meeting directly next door to a bar. The frequent reminders that it is right there as they attend the building to focus on

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their wellness is a challenge that is not needed at such a difficult time. Addiction programs and supports strongly advocate avoidance of triggering situations until the person is well into their recovery and is feeling stronger and healthier to avoid relapse.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila Markle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheila Markle, MSW RSW
Executive Director