



June 2, 2020

Dear Committee of Adjustment Members:

The Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy (WGDS) supports the request from Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (CMHA WW) to NOT locate a cannabis store on Woolwich Street beside the New Children and Youth Mental Health Hub based on the following grounds:

- Our municipality needs to uniformly maintain standards regarding the location of cannabis stores
- it is never advisable to put a vulnerable population into a known high-risk environment.

Maintaining municipal standards regarding the location of cannabis stores

- The City of Guelph controls the zoning regulations that require cannabis stores to be kept away from schools and playgrounds. This regulation has been put in place to provide a geographic barrier to protect youth from readily accessing cannabis.
- The WGDS believes that CMHA WW's Children and Youth Mental Health Hub should be classified as a "school" with regard to its location, since the population being served is primarily school-aged children.

Children and youth with mental health and addiction problems are at "at-risk" population for using cannabis

- Research has shown that children and youth with mental health issues have often turned to cannabis, using it as "self-medication" to deal with anxiety and depression.
- Research also shows that children and youth consistently make inaccurate assessments of the risk associated with cannabis – they underestimate that overuse creates addiction, and they believe that because it is "natural" it is benign, which evidence shows not to be true. THC consumed at high levels can cause psychosis which, once occurring may become a long term mental health concern. Consuming cannabis regularly has been shown to have long-term impacts on the developing adolescent brain.
- The logic that applies is the same common sense logic that suggests that locating a liquor store beside a rehab facility doesn't make sense – when options exist, there is no point in creating predictable problems. Placing vulnerable children and youth into a high risk environment is not advisable.

Sincerely,

Kate Vsetula, Co-Chair WGDS  
Director of Community and Organizational Development

Adrienne Crowder, Manager WGDS