



June 2, 2020

City of Guelph Committee of Adjustment
Council Chambers, Guelph City Hall
1 Carden St.
Guelph, ON N1H 3A1

To Whom It May Concern:

As a child and adolescent psychiatrist I am thrilled to see the forward thinking of CMHA and several community partners in planning and building a welcoming youth centre. It sends a message to children and families that “you are important, we want to work with you on the difficulties you are having, and your community cares about you.”

In my opinion potentially locating a cannabis retail store in close proximity to this centre undermines this message, and places youth at risk. I work every day with children and youth who make impulsive decisions and are easily influenced by what they see and hear. A cannabis store adjacent to where we are asking them to come, can prey upon this vulnerability.

The citizens of Guelph may not be fully aware of what a significant drug problem exists for the youth of your city. On our Child and Adolescent Inpatient Psychiatry unit in Kitchener, we admit youth everyday with serious mental health concerns from KW, Cambridge, Guelph and Rural Wellington. Substance abuse is a concern of course in all of those areas, but by far the most impaired youth, with the most serious substance use disorders complicating their mental health issues, consistently come from Guelph. The youth of your city are at risk and under siege from dangerous substance use influences, and I would encourage you to do everything possible to give them the best chance to be successful.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Heintzman, M.D. FRCP(C)
Physician Lead, CMHA Waterloo Wellington
Chief of Psychiatry, Grand River Hospital