

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Misinformation and Arrogance: Reporters and Residents Deserve an Apology

London ON - London's Chief Medical Officer of Health, owes reporters, legal and medical researchers, and residents an apology for his dismissive approach to concerns raised over drug injection sites.

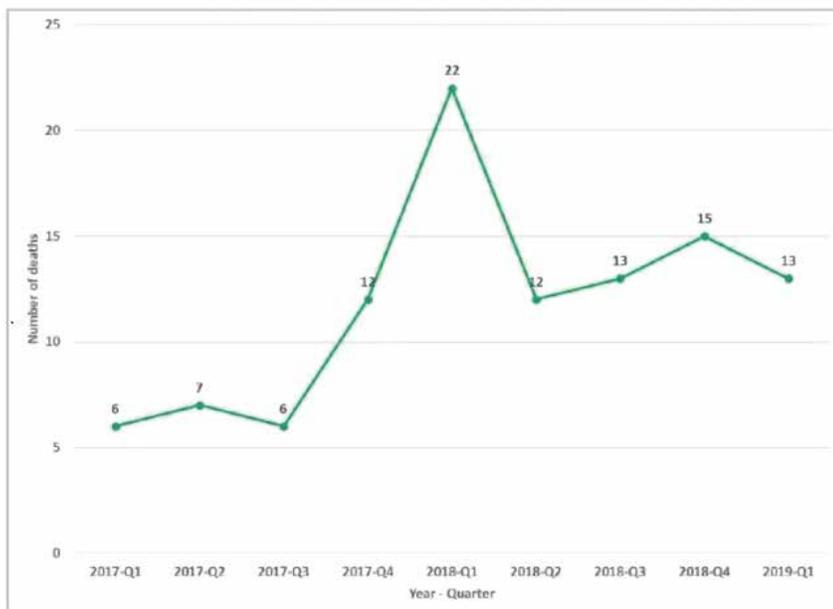
Earlier this week, Dr. Chris Mackie publicly said of information provided by the Midtown Ratepayers Association (much of it sourced by news reports): "All sorts of anecdotal evidence doesn't change the science" and called it "a mix of anecdote and opinion."

This is an insult to journalists who report on law enforcement and medical studies, who interview business owners and residents in injection site neighbourhoods, and who are faced with skyrocketing crime and social degradation. These are local and national reporters in London, Ottawa, Kamloops, Lethbridge, Calgary, Vancouver and Toronto.

"Journalists are telling the real stories of people in neighbourhoods - truths that Mackie chooses to ignore," says Denise Krogman, President of the Midtown Ratepayers Association. Case in point: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGY4IzI6R4g

Yesterday, Mackie stuck to his story that injection sites are making a positive difference in London, citing the following:

Count of mortality related to opioid toxicity in Middlesex-London, by quarter, 2017 Q1 to 2019 Q1



Data Source: Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Interactive Opioid Tool, Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2019. Available from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/substance-use/interactive-opioid-tool>. Data current as of September 13, 2019 [cited October 11, 2019].

Note: Death data for 2018 and 2019 is preliminary and subject to change.

Midtown

Ratepayers Association

Mackie stated on Twitter: "Major win as #opioid poisoning death rates stay down for a year after they spiked last winter."

That statement is **BLATANTLY FALSE. OVERDOSES DOUBLED** after a temporary injection site was opened.

And now for the facts:

Before and after London's injection site opened:

31 deaths in 2017 due to opioid overdoses in 2017 - the year before the 186 King Street site opened

62 deaths in 2018 - the year the site opened

97 cases of hospitalization in 2017

118 cases of hospitalization in 2018

315 emergency department visits in 2017

457 emergency department visits in 2018

Source: Public Health Ontario <http://bit.ly/publichealthontario>

If that's not bad enough, Mackie continues to ignore midtown residents' concerns over having a drug injection site close to a schoolyard and thousands of apartment dwellers - many of them seniors and women living alone.

The Thames Valley District School Board is also opposed to the site. <http://bit.ly/tvdsbnews> as are neighbourhood home and business owners.

It's time for Dr. Mackie to show concern for ALL London residents, not just those whose philosophies align with his own beliefs.

About the Midtown Ratepayers Association

The Midtown Ratepayers Association is a caring group of residents and business owners who want to protect the neighbourhood from crime, danger and social decline. They are ready to stand up for students, their businesses and their neighbourhood by opposing the safe injection site at 446 York Street. They will fight for their community and drug addicts by supporting fact-driven solutions that promote rehabilitation and do not enable drug use.

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