



## **DURHAM REGIONAL POLICE SERVICES BOARD**

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September 25, 2014

Hon Minister Mr. Yasir Naqvi  
Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services  
25 Grosvenor Street -18th Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 1Y6

Dear Minister Naqvi,

We are writing to seek your Government's support for two related initiatives:

1. A provincial "Patch for Patch" program to address the abuse of Fentanyl; and
2. The development of a strategy to address the proliferation of prescription drug abuse.

For some period of time, the Durham Regional Police Service has detected an increase in the illegal trafficking and abuse of prescription drugs in our community. Many of these substances are highly addictive, and dependency inflicts a wide range of suffering and costs upon individuals and communities. As you may know, a report released by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) in 2013 stated that there was an almost 250 per cent increase in the number of emergency room visits related to narcotics between 2005 and 2011 in Ontario. The report by the CCSA further notes that opioid-related deaths doubled in just over 10 years in our Province, from 13.7 deaths per million in 1991 to 27.2 per million in 2004, and that admissions to treatment programs for prescription opioids in Ontario also doubled between 2004 and 2009. Clearly the problems associated with prescription drugs have escalated to the point where our coordinated attention and action is essential.

In certain areas of Durham, a sharp increase has especially been noted in the prevalence of Fentanyl. As you may know, Fentanyl is a very powerful painkiller that can be administered through a transdermal patch obtained by prescription. A number of fatal overdoses have occurred in Durham Region that have been attributed to Fentanyl, and none of the deceased had a prescription for this medication. The Durham Regional Police Service is currently working with a variety of partners on a "Patch-for Patch" program that requires the submission of an old patch in order to receive a new patch. Communities across Ontario are embracing this best practice. However, we believe there is a need to coordinate efforts at the Provincial level to achieve the best results.

We also hold the view that a broader and more integrated approach is necessary to address problems related to prescription drugs more generally. One of the principles identified in the Province's "Crime Prevention: A Framework for Action" document is to "prevent crime by establishing integrated, multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary, responses and partnerships." Our observation is that a strategy to prevent the harmful effects of prescription drugs aligns well to the Province's overall crime prevention initiative.

We would request the Province's support for the "Patch-for-Patch" program and the development of a preventative strategy to alleviate the harms of prescription drug abuse and the burdens they are placing upon the health care and criminal justice systems. We believe that a positive first step would be an educational partnership with pharmaceutical companies, the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Ontario College of Pharmacists about approaches their members can employ to reduce the abuse of prescription drugs.

We would be delighted to work with the Province on these initiatives to improve the health and safety of our citizens.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,



Roger Anderson  
Chair



Paul Martin  
Chief

cc. President East, Ontario Association of Police Services Boards  
President Evans, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police  
Chairs, Big 12 Police Services Boards  
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Mr. Joe Dickson, MPP  
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