

From: [Latham, Hope GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Sims, Brian A PSSG:EX](#); [Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX](#); [Lewis, Glen PSSG:EX](#)
Cc: [McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX](#); [Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: FOR REVIEW: decrim NR
Date: October 31, 2021 2:45:15 PM
Attachments: [2021MMHA104598-DecrimNR-Draft13.docx](#)
Importance: High

Hi all,

We've just received the draft of the NR here, not final yet. We've passed along the KMQA to MMHA with your comments and will likely hear back tomorrow.

Please let me know if you have any comments and we can pass them along ASAP.

Thanks!

Hope Latham

Senior Public Affairs Officer

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

778 698-5698

From: [Latham, Hope GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX](#); [Sims, Brian A PSSG:EX](#); [Lewis, Glen PSSG:EX](#); [Rideout, Wayne PSSG:EX](#)
Cc: [Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: FW: FOR REVIEW: decrim NR
Date: November 1, 2021 9:24:56 AM
Attachments: [2021MMHA104598-DecrimNR-Draft14.docx](#)

FYI – final draft with MMHA DMO and MO for final review.

Hope Latham

Senior Public Affairs Officer

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

778 698-5698

From: Holoiday, Leah GCPE:EX <Leah.Holoiday@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: November 1, 2021 9:03 AM

To: McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX <Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca>; Hooper, Tyler GCPE:EX <Tyler.Hooper@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX <Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca>; Latham, Hope GCPE:EX <Hope.Latham@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: FOR REVIEW: decrim NR

Updated NR with your feedback re: para #6 incorporated.

This is with our DMO and MO for final review

From: McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX <Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca>

Sent: November 1, 2021 7:57 AM

To: Holoiday, Leah GCPE:EX <Leah.Holoiday@gov.bc.ca>; Hooper, Tyler GCPE:EX <Tyler.Hooper@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX <Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca>; Latham, Hope GCPE:EX <Hope.Latham@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Fwd: FOR REVIEW: decrim NR

Hi both: see comments below. Have shared with my MO as well, they have seen and will be in contact with your MO as well. The NR and QA will still need to go back to our ADM. Thanks!

From: [Latham, Hope GCPE:EX](#)
To: [McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX](#)
Cc: [Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: FW: MATERIALS for Mon. October 25 @ 3pm: MMF & MSM Briefing - Decriminalization
Date: October 29, 2021 10:05:17 AM

I'm back now – can send to Glen and Wayne.

Hope Latham

Senior Public Affairs Officer

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

778 698-5698

From: Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX <Matthew.G.Brown@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: October 29, 2021 7:54 AM
To: Sims, Brian A PSSG:EX <Brian.Sims@gov.bc.ca>; Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX <Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Latham, Hope GCPE:EX <Hope.Latham@gov.bc.ca>; McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX <Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: MATERIALS for Mon. October 25 @ 3pm: MMF & MSM Briefing - Decriminalization
Morning everyone,
I have no additions to Brian's edits below.

Thanks, Matt

Matt Brown

Director, Public Safety Initiatives

Policing and Security Branch

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Office: (778) 698-8432 Mobile: (250) 480-8865

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From: Sims, Brian A PSSG:EX <[Brian.Sims@gov.bc.ca](#)>
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2021 4:43 PM
To: Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX <[Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca](#)>; Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX <[Matthew.G.Brown@gov.bc.ca](#)>
Cc: Latham, Hope GCPE:EX <[Hope.Latham@gov.bc.ca](#)>; McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX <[Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca](#)>
Subject: RE: MATERIALS for Mon. October 25 @ 3pm: MMF & MSM Briefing - Decriminalization
Thanks Donna. Minor suggestions below. I wonder if we should remind people that police are separate and apart from government. Like other stakeholders who were engaged in this process, they have their own point of view on aspects of the s.56 proposal and are best suited to speak to that.

From: Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX <[Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca](#)>
Sent: Thursday, October 28, 2021 4:32 PM
To: Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX <[Matthew.G.Brown@gov.bc.ca](#)>; Sims, Brian A PSSG:EX <[Brian.Sims@gov.bc.ca](#)>

Cc: Latham, Hope GCPE:EX <Hope.Latham@gov.bc.ca>; McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX <Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: MATERIALS for Mon. October 25 @ 3pm: MMF & MSM Briefing - Decriminalization

Importance: High

Hi – can you take a look at this QA we'll add to the MMHA KMQA which we won't see it until tomorrow. We'll send this to Wayne after your review thanks.

s.13

From: [Latham, Hope GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX](#); [Sims, Brian A PSSG:EX](#); [Lewis, Glen PSSG:EX](#); [Rideout, Wayne PSSG:EX](#)
Cc: [Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX](#); [McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: FYI - Decrim KMQA
Date: November 1, 2021 1:44:26 PM
Attachments: [QA Decrim Oct27 FINAL.docx](#)

Hey there,

Here is the KMQA from MMHA on the announcement today at 3pm. I'll be monitoring live and will send over the link when I get it if you'd like to – Global will carry it as well.

Thanks!

Hope Latham

Senior Public Affairs Officer

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

778 698-5698

From: [Latham, Hope GCPE:EX](#)
To: [Lewis, Glen PSSG:EX](#); [Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX](#)
Cc: [McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX](#)
Subject: RUSH: FOR REVIEW: decrim
Date: October 31, 2021 10:39:44 AM
Attachments: [QA Decrim Oct27 DRAFT7 \(003\). BS MB edits VPD comments.docx](#)
Importance: High

Morning Glen,

I've incorporated all of the comments from VPD that Matt sent along yesterday, but we're needing sign off from you to get to MMHA to get any of their comments back.

Their announcement is tomorrow afternoon so we'll be needing to get this to them in the next couple of hours.

Let me know if you have any q's, thanks!

Hope Latham

Senior Public Affairs Officer

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

778 698-5698

From: Lewis, Glen PSSG:EX <Glen.Lewis@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: October 31, 2021 10:25 AM
To: Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX <Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Latham, Hope GCPE:EX <Hope.Latham@gov.bc.ca>; McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX <Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: FOR REVIEW: decrim

Hi Donna-

Do we have the latest draft, inclusive of Matt's revisions and comments back from MMHA? I spoke with Brian Friday night as he was returning from the Vancouver and we had concerns with the draft as it was then. Given the sensitivities on this file it would be good if we can see a consolidated draft, with all comments, before we do a final review today.

I am now around if you want to chat.

Glen

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 31, 2021, at 9:09 AM, Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX <Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi Glen - anything for me on this? Let me know either way so I can send to MO and MMHA today. Thanks! Happy Halloween

DS

On Oct 30, 2021, at 10:57 AM, Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX
<Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hi Glen! Please see Matt's follow up with VPDbelow. Can I have your feedback on the MMHA document you are reviewing at some point today so we can get it back to them soonest - they may have follow up questions and we also need to run it through our MO. Thanks!

DS

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX" <Matthew.G.Brown@gov.bc.ca>
Date: October 30, 2021 at 8:53:13 AM PDT
To: "Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX" <Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: "Latham, Hope GCPE:EX" <Hope.Latham@gov.bc.ca>, "Sims, Brian A PSSG:EX" <Brian.Sims@gov.bc.ca>, "McAndrews, Caroline GCPE:EX" <Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: Re: FOR REVIEW: decrim

Good morning,

s.13

Thanks, Matt
Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 29, 2021, at 3:27 PM, Sitter, Donna
GCPE:EX <Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

OK thanks very much – we'll send up to Wayne and Glen with your mark-up – we can add or delete VPD references later depending on what you find out. We'd like to get this to MMHA today since they are doing this on Monday.

From: Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX
<Matthew.G.Brown@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: October 29, 2021 2:58 PM
To: Latham, Hope GCPE:EX
<Hope.Latham@gov.bc.ca>; Sims, Brian A
PSSG:EX <Brian.Sims@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX
<Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca>; McAndrews,
Caroline GCPE:EX
<Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: FOR REVIEW: decrim

Hi Hope,
I've attached some draft edits. Couple of points: one, I'm still awaiting a confirmation from VPD on a couple of bullets which have been highlighted; and two, we anticipate the police will respond strongly to some of the statements made in this document.

Thanks, Matt

Matt Brown

Director, Public Safety Initiatives

Policing and Security Branch

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Office: (778) 698-8432 Mobile: (250) 480-8865

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From: Latham, Hope GCPE:EX
<Hope.Latham@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Friday, October 29, 2021 1:09 PM
To: Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX
<Matthew.G.Brown@gov.bc.ca>; Sims, Brian A

PSSG:EX <Brian.Sims@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX

<Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca>; McAndrews,

Caroline GCPE:EX

<Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: FOR REVIEW: decrim

Importance: High

Hi both,

Just following up on this. Thanks!

Hope Latham

Senior Public Affairs Officer

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

778 698-5698

From: Latham, Hope GCPE:EX

Sent: October 29, 2021 11:06 AM

To: Brown, Matthew G PSSG:EX

<Matthew.G.Brown@gov.bc.ca>; Sims, Brian A

PSSG:EX <Brian.Sims@gov.bc.ca>

Cc: Sitter, Donna GCPE:EX

<Donna.Sitter@gov.bc.ca>; McAndrews,

Caroline GCPE:EX

<Caroline.McAndrews@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: FOR REVIEW: decrim

Importance: High

Hi Matt and Brian,

Attached is the draft KMQA for decrim,

currently up with their MO for approvals, so

subject to change but want you folks to get an

eye on the enforcement pieces.

Let me know if you have any questions/comments/edits, and then I will get these to Glen and Wayne, hopefully this afternoon if possible for a chance for them to review.

Thanks!

Hope Latham

Senior Public Affairs Officer

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

778 698-5698

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2021MMHA104598
Nov. 2, 2021

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

B.C. applies for decriminalization in next step to reduce toxic drug deaths

VICTORIA – British Columbia has taken an important step forward in preventing future drug poisoning deaths by applying to the federal government to remove criminal penalties for people who possess small amounts of illicit drugs for personal use.

B.C. is the first province in Canada to seek an exemption from Health Canada under Section 56(1) of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. If approved by the federal government, the exemption would help reduce the fear and shame associated with substance use that prevents people from seeking care.

“Substance use and addiction is a public health issue – not a criminal one,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “BC is adding new health and substance use care services almost weekly, but we know shame prevents many people from accessing life-saving care. That’s why it’s crucial to decriminalize people who use drugs.”

Since the Province declared a public health emergency in 2016, 7,700 British Columbians have tragically lost their lives because of a toxic drug supply. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, B.C. saw a decrease in death due to toxic drugs. However, the COVID-19 public health emergency reversed this trend, causing toxic drug poisoning deaths to reach an all-time high.

“B.C. is in the midst of two public health emergencies: COVID-19 and the toxic drug crisis,” said Dr. Bonnie Henry, BC’s Provincial Health Officer. “The intersection of these two emergencies has produced tragic results. B.C.’s application to Health Canada to decriminalize people who use drugs is a vital step to keep people alive and help connect them with the health and social support they need.”

By treating substance use as public health challenge rather than a criminal act, the Province will create new pathways to support those seeking treatment. [s.13](#)

[s.13](#)

“Criminalizing members of our communities who use drugs has resulted in decades of causing further harms to many who are already suffering from mental or physical health challenges and/or the effects of emotional or physical trauma,” said Lisa Lapointe, B.C.’s Chief Coroner. “Decriminalization will help shift our focus from punishment, which has resulted in social isolation, stigma and fear, towards a medical model that recognizes substance use as a health issue. This is an important step that, combined with increased access to safe supply and implementation of an evidence-based model of treatment and recovery, will help to save lives.”

B.C. is transforming health and substance use services throughout the province as outlined *A Pathway to Hope*, the Province's mental health and addictions roadmap. Decriminalization is a crucial component in ending the toxic drug crisis, as the Province continues to create a full continuum of care that includes prevention, prescribed safer supply and other harm reduction measures, treatment, and recovery supports.

s.13

A broad range of partners and stakeholders played a vital role in developing the application. The province worked with health and social service providers; Indigenous partners; people with lived and living experience; municipalities; law enforcement; advocacy organizations; and clinical and research experts. The submission is intended to support further discussions between Health Canada and the B.C. government on an approach to decriminalization in B.C.

s.13

Quotes:

Mike Knott, SOLID –

"The stigma and shame I felt when I used drugs was overwhelming; I felt isolated and compelled to use drugs alone. I also felt persecuted by the criminal justice system because I was a person who used drugs. Decriminalization will help reduce the shame felt amongst people who use drugs and enhance dignity. The toxic drug crisis is a health crisis, not a criminal one."

Larry Campbell, Senate of Canada –

"I would like to congratulate the provincial government for being the first in Canada to step forward on this critical issue. We know that drug use is a health problem, not a criminal one. That means we must respond with a public health approach and not a criminal justice one. Moving towards decriminalization is one of the most important steps any government can take to save lives, families and communities."

Lisa Helps, Mayor of Victoria –

"The toxic drug crisis continues to devastate our communities and leave families broken. Decriminalization is an important step in reducing the stigma associated with drug use and saving lives of those people who use drugs. We thank the province for their leadership in submitting a

decriminalization application to Health Canada and we hope Health Canada responds favourably and swiftly.”

Katrina Jensen, AVI Health and Community Services –

“Today’s submission towards decriminalizing people who use drugs is one of the most important steps government has taken to address the toxic drug supply in British Columbia. Criminalization drives stigma and makes people reluctant to seek support. Decriminalization will save lives and make it easier to connect people to life-saving services, like those available at AVI. This is a logical and necessary response on the part of government's efforts to treat this as a health issue that it is.”

Learn More:

A Pathway to Hope: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BCMentalHealthRoadmap_2019.pdf

Stop Overdose BC: <https://www.stopoverdose.gov.bc.ca/>

Contact:

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
Communications
250 213-8172 (media line)

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2021MMHA104598
Nov. 1, 2021

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

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By treating substance use as public health challenge rather than a criminal act, the Province will create new pathways to support those seeking treatment.

“Criminalizing members of our communities who use drugs has resulted in decades of causing further harms to many who are already suffering from mental or physical health challenges and/or the effects of emotional or physical trauma,” said Lisa Lapointe, B.C.’s Chief Coroner. “Decriminalization will help shift our focus from punishment, which has resulted in social isolation, stigma and fear, towards a medical model that recognizes substance use as a health issue. This is an important step that, combined with increased access to safe supply and implementation of an evidence-based model of treatment and recovery, will help to save lives.”

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A broad range of partners and stakeholders played a vital role in developing the application. The province worked with health and social service providers; Indigenous partners; people with lived and living experience; municipalities; law enforcement; advocacy organizations; and clinical and research experts. The submission is intended to support further discussions between Health Canada and the B.C. government on an approach to decriminalization in B.C.

This submission to Health Canada is the next big step in our journey. The Province looks forward to Health Canada's response, and working urgently with the federal government to finalize and enact this policy.

Quotes:

Mike Knott, SOLID –

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Learn More:

A Pathway to Hope: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BCMentalHealthRoadmap_2019.pdf

Stop Overdose BC: <https://www.stopoverdose.gov.bc.ca/>

Contact:

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
Communications
250 213-8172 (media line)

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

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