



# Mayor's Report

March, 2018



I attended the Spring BC Mayors Caucus session in Squamish, March 15, 2018, at Quest University. Topics on the agenda for the day included the Opioid Crisis; Smart Cities Challenge; Cannabis Regulations - Making Sure Municipalities are ready; and the Rural-Urban Divide.

The speaker on the Opioid Crisis was Dr. Mark Tyndall, Professor at the UBC School of Population and Public Health. Unintentional drug overdoses have rapidly become a public health crisis in Canada. Although the rates of drug overdoses vary across the country, no region has been spared, and communities should be bracing for the worst. Targeted approaches for this crisis include dealing with HIV, Hepatitis C, Homelessness, Mental Illness, Sex work, Overdose and Drug Use. People use drugs to self-medicate, people do not take drugs to become abused, sick, homeless, stigmatized, isolated or criminalized. Society's view on drug use is changing from that of deviant illegal activity to chronic mental disorder. At the core of the current crisis is a drug supply that has become contaminated with potent synthetic opioids, mainly in the form of Fentanyl and Carfentanyl.

Every community has periodically experienced increased numbers in overdose deaths owing to transient changes in the drug supply. It appears that these highly toxic drugs are here for the foreseeable future.

This is a demand driven problem, not a supply problem. Simply warning people to avoid fentanyl or the plethora of new synthetic analogs is both naive and ineffective. Statistics show that thousands of people in the Province are at risk of overdosing.

Last year there were over 20,000 calls for drug related emergencies. Dealing with drug overdoses is very intense for our emergency services. 15,000 Naloxone kits were used in the province. In 2016 some cities opened overdose prevention sites.

If you are going to do drugs make sure you have someone with you and a Naloxone kit is available. Supervised use is safer.

The BC Action Overdose Action Exchange Plan has outlined 10 Steps:

1. Engage peers- tell them about the services available;
2. Safer drugs- how can we offer safer drugs- most have to source their drugs through illegal process;
3. Pain management therapies;
4. Supervised consumption sites - they are saving lives;
5. Addiction treatment- harm reduction is first step to recovery;
6. Align law enforcement with public health;
7. Reform drug laws- the war on drugs is a war on us;
8. Support services;
9. Counter stigma - educate, collaborate, communicate;
10. Research, surveillance, evaluation. Drugs have a huge impact on the community.

How do we identify the white-collar users who hide the fact that they have a problem and die at home without anyone knowing of their problem?

People's views are changing to where 75% of people in BC now support safe injection sites.

The Smart Cities Challenge involved a brief presentation outlining details on this initiative. It is an innovative challenge through technology and data: <http://impact.canada.ca>

Infrastructure Canada is offering prizes of \$50 million to cities over 500,000, \$10 million under 500,000, and \$5 million to under 30,000 for innovative ideas that will enhance living.

It is meant to Empower communities to innovate, take risks and think big.

Each community will define its own "challenge statement" which can touch any aspect of community life so that residents can: Feel safe and secure, Earn a good living, Move around my community, Enjoy a healthy environment, Be empowered and Included in Society and Live an Active and Healthy life.

Cannabis regulations and Making sure Municipalities are ready were also addressed at the Mayors' Caucus. Bill C-45 and Bill C-46 could well be delayed until a bit past July 2018. These Federal Bills are the framework for the legalization and regulation of cannabis in Canada.

### **Federal Responsibility - Cannabis Act (Bill C-45)**

The federal legislation will establish:

- \* Minimum federal conditions for distribution and retail sale;
- \* Minimum age for the purchase, possession and consumption;
- \* Restrictions on personal cultivation and personal possession limits; and
- \* Criminal penalties for those operating outside the legal system

The federal government will:

- \* Establish a national cannabis tracking system;
- \* Regulate product standards, labeling and packaging and the promotion and display of cannabis or cannabis accessories;
- \* License cannabis producers; and
- \* Regulate edibles within 12 months of Bill C-45 coming into force.

#### **Federal Responsibility** Bill C-46

- \* Federal Bill C-46 will:
- \* Significantly Amend the Criminal Code for impaired driving offences;
- \* Create new offences for having specified levels of drug in the blood within two hours of driving (to be set by regulation); and
- \* Provide regulatory authority to approve roadside oral fluid screening devices .

#### **Provincial Context**

Deputy Minister Working Group, ADM Public Safety Issues Committee, Cannabis Legalization & Regulation Secretariat, the Inter-ministry Working Group and the Overarching provincial goals and guiding policy are to:

- I. Prioritize health and safety;
- II. Reduce crime and the illegal market;
- III. Protect children and youth;
- IV. Address cannabis - impaired driving; and
- V. Support economic development.

In BC there have been over 48,000 responses to public engagement by far the most for any topic.

\* Provincial Engagement are as follows:

Public and Stakeholder Engagement: Sept.25- Nov. 1, 2017 saw 48,151 online responses, 800 random telephone survey responses and over 140 written Submissions.

\* Local Governments

\* Joint Provincial-Local Government Committee on Cannabis Regulation, Chief Administrative Officers forums, local government associations AGMs and meetings.

\* Indigenous Governments

Meetings with Indigenous Governments and organizations, regional teleconferences, working group under FNLC (TBC); and

\* Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

Ongoing Meetings with interested stakeholder groups.

#### **Key Provincial Decisions**

\* Minimum age

\* B.C.'s minimum age to possess, purchase and consume cannabis will be 19 \*

\* Personal possession

\* Adults will be allowed to possess up to 30 grams of non- medical cannabis in a public place;

\* Those under the legal age of 19 will be prohibited from possessing any amount of Non-medical cannabis; and

\* Cannabis transported in a motor vehicle will need to be in a sealed package, or inaccessible to vehicle occupants.

\* Places of use

\* Cannabis smoking and vaping will generally be allowed in public spaces where tobacco smoking and vaping are permitted;

\* Cannabis smoking and vaping will be banned in areas where children gather, including community beaches, parks and playgrounds;

\* Landlords and strata councils can restrict or prohibit cannabis smoking;

\* Local governments will be able to set further restrictions; and

\* Cannabis consumption will be prohibited while riding in or operating a vehicle.

\* Personal cultivation

\* B.C. Will allow adults to grow up to four cannabis plants per household;

\* Plants must not be visible from any public place off the property;

\* Home cultivation will be banned in homes used as daycares; and

\* Landlords and strata councils will be able to restrict or prohibit home cultivation at tenanted and strata properties.

*\* Drug - impaired driving*

*\* Continues to be illegal- B.C. will increase law enforcement training in this area.*

*\* B.C. will toughen provincial regulations:*

*90 Day Administrative Driving Prohibition for drug affected driving; and  
Zero tolerance for presence of THC in drivers of the Graduated Licensing  
Program.*

*\* Distribution model*

*\* B.C.'s wholesale distribution model will be government-run by the B.C.  
Liquor Distribution Branch.*

*\* Retail model*

*\* Liquor Control and Licensing Branch will be responsible for:*

*Licensing private stores; and  
Monitoring retail sector*

*\* Cannabis cannot be sold in the same stores as liquor or tobacco*

*\* Early registration process will be launched online*

*\* Licenses will require the support of local governments*

*\* Exceptions will be established for non-medical cannabis retail stores in rural  
areas- criteria currently under development' and*

*\* Liquor Distribution Branch will establish public brick and mortar stores and  
an online store.*

*Additional Considerations on cannabis will include but not be limited to the following ...*

<i>Agricultural Land Reserve</i>	<i>Revenue Sharing</i>
<i>Economic Development</i>	<i>Supply Management</i>
<i>Ticketable Offences</i>	<i>Cannabis Industry Training</i>
<i>Workplace Considerations</i>	<i>Environmental Impact</i>
<i>Housing Considerations</i>	<i>Canadian Free Trade Agreement</i>
<i>Public Awareness and Education</i>	<i>Regulatory Capture Prevention</i>
<i>School-based Education</i>	<i>Hemp Regulation</i>
<i>Data Collection</i>	<i>Long Term Governance/Oversight</i>
<i>Taxation and Pricing</i>	

*QUESTIONS ? can be directed to the:*

*Cannabis Secretariat: [Cannabis.Secretariat@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Cannabis.Secretariat@gov.bc.ca);*

*Liquor Distribution Branch: [cannabis@gov.bc.com](mailto:cannabis@gov.bc.com); and Liquor Control and Licensing Branch: [cannabisreqs@gov.bc.ca](mailto:cannabisreqs@gov.bc.ca).*

*BC Mayors unanimously voted to support UBCM's four principles for cannabis legalization.*

- 1. Cannabis legalization should not result in additional local government funding by property taxpayers;*
- 2. Local governments should be reimbursed for costs associated with the implementation of legalized cannabis;*
- 3. Local governments should be reimbursed for any additional policing costs resulting from cannabis legalization; and*
- 4. Remaining excise tax revenue (after taking out expenses incurred as part of principles 1-3 , and the federal share) should be shared between the Province of BC and local governments.*

*There are also points from the Joint Provincial -Local Government Committee on Cannabis Regulation that I will share next month along with the discussion on the Rural-Urban divide.*

*We wish to congratulate and extend our utmost appreciation to Judy Caplette who has retired after twenty years serving the public while working in our Town office. All the best in your future endeavors Judy as you participate in the next chapter of your life.*

*Congratulations to the 2017 Chamber of Commerce award recipients. Lorne Scheffer (Citizen of the Year), Ryan Rai (Nicole Stock Service Award), Roy and June Sandsmark South Shore Cabinetry (Business of the Year), and Brian Kitchen (Customer Service Award). All of you are very deserving of your recognition for your contributions to making our community a much better place.*

*April is Autism Awareness Month and April 2nd is Autism Awareness Day. The Town will participate with "Light It Up Blue" once again. If you notice blue lights in any of our public spaces please recognize the Awareness we are promoting.*

*On Friday March 23, 2018 the Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations provided Catalyst Paper the authorization to begin storage of water in advance of April 1. On Friday afternoon the release flow from Cowichan Lake will be reduced to 25 cubic meters per second and held at that flow. With current snow pack and possible rainfall, it is possible to regain full lake levels.*