



# Fontbonne Ministries

August 27, 2024

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Provincial Government announced initiatives to address challenges experienced by substance users: homelessness, mental health issues and user-focused health services.

Fontbonne Ministries welcomes critical supports for our most vulnerable but we are dismayed that this announcement also included the closing of 10 safe consumption sites across the province – including the one at South Riverdale Community Health Centre.

Fontbonne Ministries has been serving the vulnerable in our community with compassion and respect for 24 years. We believe that every life has value and each of us deserves to be treated with dignity.

We know the people whose lives have been saved by accessing the safe consumption site at South Riverdale because we see them at our drop-in every day.

That's why we also know that substance use is most often the result of trauma – often unspeakable trauma – and is a way people try to cope with the pain.

To suggest that closing these sites will end people's struggles with addiction is a mistake that will have deadly consequences.

Denying people from using these essential services will mean more people dying of an overdose death, perhaps alone, in a dark alley, with no one there to help.

What is needed: a wraparound approach that includes a coordinated network of personalized and community-based services and supports – including crucial and life-saving harm reduction programs.