



Four Pillars News - October 2003  
Issue No. 1 Vol. I

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Four Pillars News is published eight times per year for the Mayor's Four Pillars Coalition by the City of Vancouver.

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by Lesli Boldt, Corporate Communications, City of Vancouver

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To increase support for additions starting in the Downtown Eastside, Vancouver Foundation has recently established the Four Pillars Fund. Partnering with the City of Vancouver this fund will encourage community projects that make a difference in the lives of people suffering from addictions in the DTES.

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The cheerful hand-painted posters on the wall and ceiling add a touch of vibrancy to the spacious lounge. Welcome to Odyssey II, a substance misuse service for youth.

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## [Tell your story in the Four Pillars News](#)

Do you have news on how your company or organization is making a contribution to substance misuse prevention, treatment, harm reduction or enforcement? Submit your stories for publication in future issues of the Four Pillars News.

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## [Drug Policy News in Brief](#)

### **National addiction research plan urged**

*Source: Ottawa Citizen, October 5, 2003*

Ottawa - A leading addictions expert is recommending a national research agenda to address alcoholism and illicit drug abuse.

>> [Read more](#)

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### FOCUS ON ... PREVENTION

## [Focus on Prevention](#)

By Donald MacPherson, Drug Policy Coordinator, City of Vancouver

There has been a lot of discussion and debate in Vancouver in recent years about the impact of substance misuse on individuals, families, and the neighbourhoods in which we live. This discussion has been largely driven by the unprecedented harm from drug misuse that has occurred in Vancouver 's Downtown Eastside.

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## FOUR PILLARS NEWS

# North America's first supervised injection site opens in Vancouver

by Lesli Boldt, Corporate Communications, City of Vancouver

**Vancouver** - Mayor Larry Campbell joined Vancouver Coastal Health CEO Ida Goodreau, former Vancouver mayor Philip Owen, provincial and federal government representatives, and community members on September 15, 2003 to announce the official opening of the supervised injection site (SIS) research project, also known as *insite*, in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

The site - located at 139 East Hastings in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside - is operated by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) in partnership with PHS Community Services Society. The site has received an exemption from the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* that allows users to legally inject at the site. *insite* opened its doors to clients on September 21, 2003.



A sample injection kit at the SIS.  
Photo credit: Joshua Berson

"The opening of the supervised injection site is turning point in our approach to dealing with addictions," Campbell said at the news conference. "I'd like to thank the citizens of Vancouver for their overwhelming support for this initiative. Your support has been the driving force behind this project."


Campbell acknowledged the ongoing support and work by VCH, the Vancouver Police Department and the provincial and federal governments to bring the three-year SIS research pilot from vision to reality. The \$1.5 million research project, run by the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS and funded by Health Canada, will assess whether the SIS will reduce the harm associated with injection drug use to individuals and the community.

The site is a clean, safe environment where users can inject their own drugs under the supervision of health care staff. Nurses and counselors will provide on-site access and referral to addiction treatment services, primary health care and mental health providers, as well as first aid and wound care. *insite* has the capacity to supervise up to 800 injections daily in the 12-seat injection room. To date, the site has accommodated between 200 and 300 visits per day.

The SIS is a vital part of a harm reduction plan to reduce overdose and overdose deaths and the spread of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C, and to provide access to primary health care to drug users in Vancouver. Harm reduction is key part of Vancouver's integrated "four pillars" approach to Vancouver's drug problem, which also includes prevention, treatment and enforcement.

"We must remember that the supervised injection site is only one component of a broader plan to address addictions issues in the Downtown Eastside, and throughout the VCH region," said VCH President and CEO Ida Goodreau.

"No one should expect the Downtown Eastside drug scene to change overnight. However, in combination with other prevention, treatment and policing efforts, we hope to reduce drug related deaths, and see injection drug users get the health care, treatment and support they need to live healthier lives," said Campbell.

For more information on the SIS research pilot, including site statistics, check out the website at [www.vch.ca/sis](http://www.vch.ca/sis). More information on Vancouver's Four Pillars Drug Strategy can be found at [www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/fourpillars](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/fourpillars). 

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## FOUR PILLARS NEWS

### Supporting Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

by Sarah Chilvers, Vancouver Foundation

Descriptions of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) are as familiar as they are discouraging: the poorest postal code in Canada and home to an open-air drug market. What is not as well publicized is the strength and resilience of the people who live there and the pivotal role Vancouver Foundation plays in the community.

To increase support for addictions starting in the Downtown Eastside, Vancouver Foundation has recently established the Four Pillars Fund. Partnering with the City of Vancouver this fund will encourage community projects that make a difference in the lives of people suffering from addictions in the DTES.

Over the years, Vancouver Foundation has made numerous grants to not-for-profit organizations working in the DTES, guided by the principles of inclusiveness, community participation and respect for diversity of opinion.

This permanent endowment fund will provide grants to organizations that follow the "Four Pillars" approach to dealing with addiction: prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and enforcement.

Seeding the endowment over three years for a total of \$250,000, Vancouver Foundation hopes to grow the fund through donations from individuals, organizations and government who share the desire to act.

"This is a call to action for those who would financially participate in an effective funding program focused on addictions starting in the Downtown Eastside," said Richard Mulcaster, President and CEO of Vancouver Foundation. "I know there are a lot of people in our town who have an abiding concern for this issue and the desire to make a difference."

Patrice Pratt, member of Vancouver Foundation's Board of Directors and Chair of the Health & Social Development Advisory Committee, will chair the Four Pillars Fund Advisory Committee. Composed chiefly of people who live and work in the DTES, as well as government representatives, this group will follow the process of other advisory committees at Vancouver Foundation: reviewing applications and recommending grants to Vancouver Foundation's Board of Directors for approval.

Former Vancouver Mayor Philip Owen will chair the Fund Development committee as he is convinced people want to get involved and help alleviate the suffering of



Four Pillars Fund chair Philip Owen and Mayor Larry Campbell.  
Photo credit: Joshua Berson

local residents.

"By demonstrating support through donations to the Four Pillars Fund, the community can help those people and organizations working hard in the DTES do incredible things," said Owen. 🌈

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## FOUR PILLARS NEWS

### Historic progress...but a long road still ahead

by Larry Campbell, Mayor of Vancouver

Eleven months ago I had the honour of being chosen mayor of Vancouver in a civic election where the Four Pillars drug strategy and its proposal for safe injection sites emerged as the defining issue for the voters of Vancouver.

For the first time, citizens from every neighbourhood and background came together in the shared belief that no people are disposable, that addiction is an illness, and that we should seek to reduce the harm caused by substance abuse, not increase it. This shared commitment to addressing Vancouver's drug problem – particularly in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside – was the driving force behind the opening of North America's first supervised injection site last month.

While it has been an honour for me to play a leadership role in helping to move the Four Pillars drug strategy forward, I also recognize that the "heavy lifting" in getting public support for the strategy had already been done by former mayor Philip Owen and the members of the Coalition for Drug Treatment and Crime Prevention (now called the Four Pillars Coalition).

The Mayor's Coalition accomplished what government alone never could – it put addiction and substance misuse in Vancouver on the local, provincial and national health care agendas. Perhaps more importantly, the Coalition gave the Four Pillars drug strategy the public acceptance and credibility necessary to get past the rhetoric and on to taking concrete action to deal with the grave substance misuse problems facing our city.

The supervised injection site was perhaps the most pressing priority for Vancouver's Four Pillars drug strategy. Immediate action was necessary to stem the epidemic spread of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, other communicable diseases among injection drug users in the Downtown Eastside, and the staggering number of drug overdose deaths in Vancouver – over 1200 deaths since 1993.

The opening of the East Hastings site is a major step forward in the Four Pillars drug strategy, but let's not kid ourselves – our work is just beginning. We've got to continue our work with the Vancouver Police Department on a long-term policing plan that will support all four pillars. We need to look at by-law enforcement and criminal justice issues that surround the drug problem. And, we need to set our sights on strengthening prevention and treatment, to reach young people and drug



Mayor Larry Campbell with *DaVinci's Inquest's* Nicholas Campbell at the opening of the supervised injection site in September.

Photo credit: Joshua Berson

users before they become another statistic.

To that end, I'd like to invite all Coalition members to attend the upcoming, Four Pillars Coalition-sponsored Prevention Forum on November 20 and 21, at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Downtown Vancouver. At this forum, we'll be challenging the community and each other to come up with new, innovative ways to look at prevention in this city. The dialogue begun at this forum will culminate in a comprehensive prevention plan for Vancouver, to be released in 2004.

While we've come a long way, we've got a long, long way to go. As chair of the Four Pillars Coalition, I'd like to encourage every member of the Coalition to work with me to move the Four Pillars drug strategy forward. There are many ways you can contribute to the Coalition - with your time, energy, expertise, resources, or financial support. Look for new opportunities to stay involved in the Coalition in 2004, including special events and meetings for Coalition members, and more regular full Coalition meetings throughout the year.

To give the City your feedback on the Four Pillars drug strategy, the Coalition, and how we're doing in meeting our goals, send an e-mail to [fourpillars@city.vancouver.bc.ca](mailto:fourpillars@city.vancouver.bc.ca), or directly to me at [larry\\_campbell@city.vancouver.bc.ca](mailto:larry_campbell@city.vancouver.bc.ca). I'm looking forward to working with you again in the weeks and months ahead. 🌈

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## FOUR PILLARS NEWS

### Focus on Prevention

By Donald MacPherson, Drug Policy Coordinator, City of Vancouver

There has been a lot of discussion and debate in Vancouver in recent years about the impact of substance misuse on individuals, families, and the neighbourhoods in which we live. This discussion has been largely driven by the unprecedented harm from drug misuse that has occurred in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Thousands of lives have been seriously damaged or lost as a result of our inability to sufficiently intervene in the lives of those addicted to alcohol and other drugs. This human suffering has brought home the need to implement a comprehensive, integrated and evidence-based approach to addictions for Vancouver, one that coordinates action across all four pillars of prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement.

Our current focus on prevention is an important way to build and expand upon the growing public awareness about substance misuse in Vancouver. An open and public dialogue on prevention is a chance for us to:

- look more broadly at the roots of addiction in our society;
- why people use and misuse psychoactive substances;
- how we cope in a society where the use and misuse of alcohol, tobacco and prescription drugs is so common,
- how individuals become disconnected from their families, communities and social structures and supports that provide meaning and stability in their lives;
- most importantly, what we as citizens can do to support efforts to reduce the harm that substance misuse do to our families, neighbours and the community as a whole.

Substance misuse prevention is an area where we all have a role to play in creating a healthier, more informed and responsive community to those with substance misuse problems. We look forward to hearing more about what prevention means for you. 🌈

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## FOUR PILLARS NEWS

### Boys' and Girls' Club of Greater Vancouver

By Zarina Mulla, Social Planner, Drug Policy Program

The cheerful hand-painted posters on the wall and ceiling add a touch of vibrancy to the spacious lounge. A couple of young people spar cerebrally in a game of chess, oblivious to the world around them. Others enjoy a relaxed conversation on a comfortable couch. A lazy Labrador curled up on an enormous cushion completes the scene. Welcome to Odyssey II, a substance misuse service for youth.

Odyssey II is an outpatient program offering support services to youth and families affected by substance misuse. The Odyssey program designs services to meet the specific needs of the youth, most of who are from the eastside of Vancouver. The program focuses on group work, counseling, a drop-in program and hot meals are provided twice a week.



Fun times at Odyssey II.

Photo credit: Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Greater Vancouver

Kathy Snowden, senior program director for the Odyssey program, is interested in the Four Pillars drug strategy, because "...it's the first time we've had a concerted, city-wide approach that takes judgment out of using drugs and alcohol."

Snowden says that while prevention is key, it shouldn't simply be about telling kids "not to do drugs." "That approach wouldn't have worked for the kids who reach out for help at Odyssey," says Snowden. Odyssey II is also interested in treatment and harm reduction, and Snowden would like to see the four pillars strategy unfold through drop-in centres, outreach, counselling, family support, community centres, housing and recreational opportunities for youth.

The main challenge is funding these services. "If more resources are not made available for youth services, we will see more Vancouver kids go underground and fall between the cracks," says Snowden.

*For more information on the Boys' and Girls' Clubs' of Greater Vancouver and their Odyssey II program, contact Kathy Snowden at 604-879-8853.* 

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## FOUR PILLARS NEWS

### Four Pillars Coalition to host Prevention Symposium in November

The Mayor's Four Pillars Coalition is sponsoring *Visioning a Future for Prevention: A Local Perspective*, a public symposium on substance misuse prevention to be held at the Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver on November 20 and 21, 2003.

The prevention symposium will be hosted by Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell and moderated by CBC Radio's Kathryn Gretsinger, and will feature presentations and panel discussions with experts in the field of drug and alcohol prevention, including:

[Neil Boyd](#), Professor, Criminology, SFU

[Perry Kendall](#), BC Provincial Health Officer

[Robin Room](#), Centre for Social Research in Alcohol and Drugs, Sweden

[Dan Reist](#), Kaiser Foundation

[Rodney Skager](#), Professor, University of California at Los Angeles

...and many more.

The event will feature a wide range of local perspectives on prevention and provide an opportunity to explore what a comprehensive, integrated and evidence-based prevention strategy for Vancouver might look like.

This event is free and open to the public. However, space is limited and pre-registration is required for both the Thursday night and all day Friday sessions-day sessions...so register early. Specific program details will be available soon our Web site at [www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/fourpillars](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/fourpillars).

Date and time: Thursday, November 20 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Friday, November 21 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All Four Pillars Coalition members are urged to attend this important event. To register for the Thursday or Friday session please contact Continuing Studies at SFU Harbour Centre at 604.291.5100, by e-mail at [cs\\_hc@sfu.ca](mailto:cs_hc@sfu.ca) or by fax at 604.291.5098.

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#### FOUR PILLARS NEWS

## Drug Policy News in Brief

### National addiction research plan urged

Source: *Ottawa Citizen*, October 5, 2003

**Ottawa** - A leading addictions expert is recommending a national research agenda to address alcoholism and illicit drug abuse.

Dr. Remi Quirion, scientific director at the Douglas Hospital Research Centre in Montreal, is one of about 70 addiction specialists and researchers from across Canada who met in Kanata earlier this month to discuss addictions research.

The group agreed on nine strategic directions for research into the causes and consequences of substance abuse and addiction over the next five years. Topics include the biology of addiction, understanding youth addiction issues, sex and gender influences, First Nations peoples, health promotion and public policy. 🌈

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FOUR PILLARS NEWS

## Tell your story in the Four Pillars News

Do you have news on how your company or organization is making a contribution to substance misuse prevention, treatment, harm reduction or enforcement in Vancouver?

Ask us how we can help you share your story. Here's your chance to tell your fellow Four Pillars Coalition members and the public how you're making a contribution to the Four Pillars Drug Strategy in our community.

You can write and submit your own story to us, or suggest an idea for us to follow up on. Two to three member stories will be selected for publication in each issue of the *Four Pillars News*. For more information or to submit a story idea, contact *Four Pillars News* Editor [Lesli Boldt](#).

Note: The editor will select articles and story ideas, and will inform Coalition members if their story idea has been selected for publication in an upcoming issue. Byline credit will be given for submitted stories written by Coalition members. Stories should be no more than 350-400 words in length. Photo submissions are encouraged. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted articles for length and clarity. 🌈

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