



# NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

O T T A W A  
September 25, 2015

Donald MacPherson  
Canadian Drug Policy Coalition

Richard Elliott  
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

Donna May  
Moms United and Mandated to Saving the Lives of Drug Users

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Dear Donald MacPherson, Richard Elliott and Donna May,

Thank you for your letter of August 28, 2015 regarding the New Democratic Party's position on five key drug policy questions. We are pleased to have the opportunity to provide you with our positioning on these important matters.

*Does your party support restoring harm reduction as a key pillar in Canada's federal drug strategy, including support for supervised consumption services as one important component of an overall federal strategy on drugs — and as part of efforts to prevent the spread of HIV and hepatitis C (HCV), associated with unsafe injection drug use?*

New Democrats see harm reduction as a fundamental pillar in the framing of Canada's drug policy. Its arbitrary removal is symptomatic of Stephen Harper's decade of overriding scientific, evidence-based policymaking with a destructive ideology-driven approach. *A New Democratic government will build its health policies on the basis of evidence and science.*

On this basis, New Democrats recognize and support the use of supervised consumption services. NDP MP Libby Davies, a long-time advocate for supervised consumption services as an effective harm reduction tool, championed the fight against Bill C-2 in Parliament.

*Does your party support Good Samaritan legislation as one important component of a comprehensive approach to addressing the pandemic of death by drug overdose in Canada, and expediting access to naloxone by making it a non-prescription drug?*

The NDP is in favour of measures aimed at improving public health and preserving human life, and not just looking to score political points as the Conservatives have done on this issue.

Assisting someone whose life is in danger is part of our social responsibilities. The NDP is committed to working with the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition and all relevant stakeholders to develop intelligent and effective policies that will better protect citizens who come to the assistance of someone in an emergency situation due to overdose.

We are also committed to working collaboratively with doctors and medical experts to evaluate and implement evidence-based harm reduction strategies, such as adopting medical recommendations to improve access to naloxone and assessing whether it should be available without a prescription.

*Does your party support considering new approaches to regulating and controlling cannabis production, distribution and possession, as a way of minimizing the harms of the cannabis industry and cannabis use, promote public health, and respect the human rights of adults who use it?*

New Democrats have long said that no one should be going to jail or be stuck with a criminal record for possession of marijuana for personal use. We have pledged to decriminalize possession of small amounts of marijuana immediately. When it comes to marijuana, we need an approach that focuses on health promotion, public education, and safety. It's been 40 years since the LeDain Commission looked into the non-medical use of drugs and successive Liberal and Conservative governments have done nothing to update the government's understanding of marijuana use in Canada today.

*Given the scientific evidence of the ineffectiveness of mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offences, does your party support eliminating the use of such sentences and again allowing judges to employ discretionary practices for these offences?*

The NDP is not in favour of the overuse of mandatory minimum sentences. In 2012, we opposed the Conservatives' Bill C-10, which called for this type of sentence for non-violent crimes like drug possession. The NDP believes that an approach to justice and public safety that is limited to punishment and incarceration is insufficient. To ensure the long-term safety of our communities, an NDP government will put forward a balanced strategy that is smart on crime, focusing on crime prevention, prosecution, rehabilitation of offenders and victim's rights.

*Does your party support Canada advocating at the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs for a comprehensive approach to drugs based on evidence, public health objectives, and human rights standards, including support for harm reduction programs?*

Yes.

*Does your party support the creation of a mechanism within the United Nations that brings countries and civil society experts together to consider alternatives to drug prohibition as the main strategy for controlling drugs?*

Yes.

Thank you for your interest.

**Canada's New Democrats**