



Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Supporting police professionals through innovative and inclusive police leadership to advance the safety and security of all Canadians.

November 27, 2024

Statement: Decriminalization for Simple Possession of Illicit Drugs

As a result of the experience in British Columbia associated to the January 2023 three-year exemption under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* that decriminalized the possession of small amounts of certain illicit drugs for personal use in British Columbia, the CACP Board no longer supports the decriminalization of any amount of illicit drugs for personal use.

Since the exemption came into effect, police have witnessed trends of concern, including a continued high rate of opioid overdose deaths as well as growing fear among law-abiding community members due to public drug use and drug-related criminal activity.

While robust, evidence-based healthcare, addiction, and social programs are vital, drug enforcement remains an essential tool to address the public safety risks linked to illicit drug use. Beyond mitigating drug-related crime, police-led enforcement can serve as a gateway to treatment through pre-charge/post-charge diversion and judicially supervised treatment programs for individuals in need of critical medical and social services.

The CACP's leadership strongly urges the Federal Government to collaborate with provinces to adopt a comprehensive systems-based approach. This should include significantly expanding inpatient care as well as improving access to effective and sustainable treatment and social services programming that ensures individuals who require essential mental health and addictions care receive immediate and ongoing assistance.

We call on the Federal Government to reconsider its current approach and to engage law enforcement, healthcare providers, and community stakeholders in developing more effective mental health and addictions solutions. Protecting the safety and well-being of all Canadians must remain the highest priority.

Commissioner Tom Carrique
President, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police