

Wednesday, November 25, 2020

Hon. Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Premier's Office, Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

While the world comes together in the fight against COVID-19...a fight for our lives, our main streets are also fighting for their very existence. Ontario and indeed all of Canada's main streets are mainly represented by our Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and are the collective HEART of Canada, showcasing our Heritage, our Economy, our Arts, our Revitalization (or in this case Recovery) and our Tourism.

We thank you for the steps you, and the Canadian Government, have taken during COVID-19. During this focused fight we must not lose sight of the other pandemic that is affecting our lives and the lives of thousands – the Opioid Crisis.

This is why the OBIAA Board stands beside so many municipalities to call for a focus that brings all provinces to develop a National approach on the issues, and why we have adopted this following resolution:

OBIAA BOARD RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS communities across Canada, including the communities represented by the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association (OBIAA), are struggling to deal with the opioid overdose health crisis.

AND WHEREAS OBIAA acknowledges the efforts currently being undertaken by the Provincial and Federal Governments, but also acknowledges that these efforts are failing in reducing the number of overdoses and overdose deaths.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that OBIAA urges the Governments of Canada and Ontario to recognize, acknowledge and declare a National Health crisis (epidemic) and work with Provinces and Municipalities to develop comprehensive, adequately funded drug strategies to address this health crisis in our cities.

NOW BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to the Prime Minister of Canada, Canada's Minister of Health, the Premier of Ontario, Ontario Minister of Health, Ontario Minister of Long-Term Care, and Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.



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OBIAA believes that by taking the initiative to facilitate, collaborate and build partnerships to tackle visible, street-based concerns, we are investing in the economic competitiveness of our neighbourhoods and commercial districts.

Our BIAs can help. We want to help to develop and deliver the solutions in the community.

There is a need to have a “National Strategy” on Mental Health and Addiction that will help address the issues within our communities that connect all (3) three levels of Government. The Urban Issues paper (<https://downtown.org/ida-canada/>), created by the Canada IDA organization, echoes this request: Establish a National Task Force on the national and growing opioid crisis. The task force should focus on creating coordinated funding and solutions to mitigate the causes and effects of addiction

Throughout this pandemic, the Opioid crisis continues and are deeply affecting our main streets.

If we do not focus on this, the COVID recovery process will be hampered. Therefore, if there was ever at time to create a National approach to the Opioid crisis it is now.

Sincerely,
OBIAA Board of Directors

Cc: Ontario Minister of Health
Ontario Minister of Long-Term Care
Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

ABOUT OBIAA:

OBIAA is the network that represents unique and vibrant BIAs across Ontario. The Association, incorporated in 2001, supports and advocates on behalf of its members through the building and nurturing of strong relationships and partnerships. OBIAA is a leader in the development and sharing of information, tools, resources and best practices, and is the ONE voice on common issues. www.obiaa.com

