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INSITE WILL STAY OPEN

VANCOUVER— "The court ruling today which denied the Federal government the authority to shut down INSITE, is a triumph of health, science and rule-of-law over narrow minded, punitive ideology" said Dr. Hedy Fry, M.P. for Vancouver Centre, Physician and past Minister responsible for the Vancouver Agreement that helped initiate Canada's first injection site in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

"What is even sweeter is that the Portland Society, which runs Insite, was also awarded court costs" said Fry. "Having to seek relief in the courts from the bullying tactics of the Harper government put the non- profit society under heavy financial stress".

The 2:1 decision ruled that delivery of health care services was a clear provincial jurisdiction. In practical terms it means that the Federal government does not have the authority to shut down Insite.

Insite began as a 3 year, safe-injection site and clinical pilot project, undertaken by UBC and the Centre for Excellence at St Paul's Hospital. It was the first of its kind in North America. Results showed 100% reduction in overdose deaths among high-risk IV drug users who attended the facility. The surprising and positive "other" effect was a dramatic increase in the number of these hard-core users who sought detox and treatment; prompting the development of a 24 bed detox facility above InSite called Onsite. Another expected effect was the decrease in the spread of HIV/ AIDS and Hepatitis C in this cohort. These results were validated by over 24 international research bodies.

The project was a joint initiative of the (then) Federal Liberal government and the provincial and municipal governments under the Vancouver Agreement. Subsequently, the Harper Conservative government refuted the clinical results of Insite's Research Project and sought to shut down the facility.

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