

Speaker Series and GM ... January 25, 2022 ... 7:00 pm



Donald MacPherson

Topic ... Saving Lives: Responding to the Opioid Crisis in Canada

Topic Preview ...

Accidental opioid overdose deaths in Canada were of critical concern before the pandemic. But, in the six months following the implementation of the COVID-19 prevention measures – April to September 2020, there were 3,351 apparent opioid toxicity deaths. This number represents a 74% increase over the previous six months. CFUW was motivated to act and identified the opioid crisis as a National Initiative for focus.

Factors contributing to a worsening of the overdose crisis include the increasingly toxic drug supply, increased feelings of isolation, stress and anxiety and limited availability or accessibility of services for people who use drugs. The need to treat opioid addiction as a health issue versus a criminal issue has never been greater. Right now, we need to save lives!

Our Speaker ... Donald MacPherson

Donald MacPherson is the Director of the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition (CDPC) and Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University. Formerly, he was North America's first Drug Policy Coordinator at the City of Vancouver where he worked for 22 years and is the author of Vancouver's ground-breaking Four Pillars Drug Strategy in 2001. He is currently the Chair of the board of the International Drug Policy Consortium a civil society organization working to improve policy responses to drugs globally. His publications include the books *Raise Shit! Social Action, Saving Lives* (2009) and *More Harm than Good: Drug Policy in Canada* (2016). In 2007, he received the Kaiser Foundation National Award of Excellence in Public Policy in Canada. In 2009, he was awarded the Richard Dennis Drug Peace Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Drug Policy Reform by the Drug Policy Alliance in the United States. In 2019, he was given a Lifetime Achievement Award from the BC Centre on Substance Use and an Honorary Doctorate from Adler University in Chicago/Vancouver for his contribution to social justice in the field of drug policy.

Mr. MacPherson will speak to us from Vancouver using a Zoom videoconferencing connection. This meeting is open to people of all ages and genders.