

To: Donna Unwin

Mar.1, 2021

From: Sylvia Pal, Janis Bell, Brenda MacPherson, Peggy Millson,Carolynn Schiller

Re: Resolution 3: Canada's Opioid Crisis

Opioid use and misuse is a huge problem and our discussion reflected the fact that while there is a lot of information and many ideas about possible solutions (or at least ways to mitigate the harm being done) there is a lack of will on the part of government to act. So it is important that CFUW have a policy in place that allows us to advocate for change.

All of us were disappointed that the Resolution did not propose the decriminalization of possession in small amounts. There is much evidence to suggest that treating addiction as a public health issue rather than a criminal offence leads to far better outcomes. Portugal, for example, has decriminalized all substances for personal use and reports improved health outcomes and fewer deaths.

It was suggested that there should have been more emphasis on prevention. Also there was no mention of residential treatment.

There are really two issues being dealt with in Resolution 3: one, the addiction that can develop with the improper use of opioids for pain management ; and two, opiate overdose arising from the use of dangerous opiates, both pharmaceutical and illegally produced, by persons who are addicted. Part of the Resolution is dealing with prevention, and the other with managing a crisis that is costing thousands of lives every year.

We support the Resolution but are suggesting an amendment to the wording of #3 under the first Resolved, adding "for pain management and/or opioid addiction" which we consider better reflects the intention to address both issues.

Currently:

3. updating current prescription and treatment guidelines;

Amendment:

3. updating current prescription and treatment guidelines *for pain management and/or opioid addiction;*

We propose that Resolution 3: Canada's Opioid Crisis be approved as amended.