

The City of Ottawa and Persons with Environmental Sensitivities

Chris Brown
ages.ca
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Surprising Facts

- Not one disease; a compendium of disorders.
- Not new in modern times nor to medicine.
- Many health, public issues, as with infection.
- There has always been a legally-obligating, publicly-insured method of diagnosis.
- One must not subject persons or populations to a reverse onus in clinical or other settings.
- Effects can be serious, including death.
- 15 percent prevalence, mostly undiagnosed.
- Cities informed by Ontario in 1985, provinces by Health and Welfare in 1991.

Municipal Problems

- Misconceptions are contributing to isolation, injuries and deaths, with costs.
- People with sensitivities are denied protections normally provided to the public.
- Many municipal services are inaccessible.
- There is not an equitable availability of special needs services.
- Other levels of government are contributing to harm.
- Public institutions affect public attitudes.

Example Set by City

- It is okay to cause damages to persons with sensitivities by imposing a reverse onus.
- It is okay to cause damages to persons with sensitivities through arbitrary interference.
- It is okay to hurt people with sensitivities in ways from which other people are protected.
- It is okay to tolerate barriers in service delivery.
- It is okay to adopt a revisionist history that obscures the means and obligation to protect.
- It is okay to co-opt persons with diagnosed sensitivities into accepting a narrative that invisibilises liability for the killing of persons with undiagnosed sensitivities.

Isolated by Attitudes

- People with sensitivities often live apart.
- Fear affects advocates.
 - Many advocates invisibilise the most serious, the most threatening issues, to avoid personal or political consequences of whistle-blowing.
- Invisibilisation is revictimisation.
- Invisibilisation enables victimisation.
- Some health care professionals, employers, spouses and others (even politicians!) take advantage of peoples' felt vulnerability.

Preventable Injuries

- Health Care Recipients
 - especially infants and babies, 15% of adults
 - undiagnosed drug sensitivity, eating disorders
 - psych patients with undiagnosed CNS reactions
- Exposures by City or others
 - application of products in schools and other public facilities
 - diesel, idling, cleaning, heating, paint, perfume, roofing, dry cleaning, pesticides, crematoria.
 - workplace Section 217.1 injuries, duty of care
 - sometimes with criminal intent
- Injuries to municipal staff

Unnecessary Deaths

- Medical Care Recipients
 - Section 216 homicides due to imprudence about undiagnosed drug sensitivities, environments
- Psychiatric Care Recipients
 - persons with undiagnosed CNS reactions
 - eating disorder deaths, other risk groups
 - suicides
- Health Canada
 - encouraged protections prior to 1993
 - protections subsequently abandoned
 - people who were to have been protected are being injured or killed instead.

Municipal Protections Denied

- Public health and safety
 - child care, schools, hospitals, all facilities
 - suicide prevention
 - employment safety
- Human rights compliance
 - accessibility of facilities and services
 - employment accessibility
- Crime prevention, investigation, enforcement
 - educating victims and public (crime prevention)
 - section 216 homicides, Section 217.1 injuries
 - criminal negligence, endangerment, assaults
 - guidelines for officers, as by SFPD

Accessibility of Services

- Water
- Health Care, Public Health
- Schools, Education, Libraries
- Sports and Recreation
- Public Transit, Train Station, Airports
- Employment
- Building Inspection
- Emergency, Public, Seniors' Housing
- Protective Services, Provincial Court
- Hotels (Government, Tourism, Business)

Other Levels of Government

- Province, Feds dodging liability.
 - Protections encouraged prior to 1993 were abandoned, resulting in several thousand unnecessary deaths, injuries, other damages.
- Officials endanger by forwarding a revisionist history that invisibilises foreknowledge.
- Focus on products, ignore legal obligations concerning use in populations where there are always persons with sensitivities.
- Province, Feds cannot be ignored due to municipal consequences.

Problems Summarised

- Misconceptions are contributing to isolation, injuries and deaths.
- People with sensitivities are denied protections normally available to the public.
- Many municipal services are inaccessible.
- There is not an equitable availability of special needs services.
- The effect of other levels of government cannot be ignored.
- Public institutions influence, even regulate how people act in communities.

Moving Forward

- Health department needs 12 step program.
 - misadventures left legacy of misconceptions.
 - role pivotal, needs dignified presence.
 - must stop eclipsing the actual history with revisionist version about “environmental medicine.”
- Actions speak louder than words.
 - Councillors and staff have a responsibility to protect, be accessible, and meet special needs.
- Communicate with Province and Feds.
 - The practice of eclipsing history, legal responsibilities, former protections, has municipal consequences.