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CHIEF CORONER

June 20, 2019

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Ms. Lisa Lapointe  
Chief Coroner  
Office of the Chief Coroner  
PO Box 9259 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria BC V8W 9J4

2016-0380-0010

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

Thank you for your letter dated March 19, 2019, regarding the death of Juan Carlos Salvany Sailes, who died in Coquitlam, BC on October 19, 2016.

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and the British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) have carefully reviewed the two recommendations that were directed at both Ministries, as well as the Health Authorities and the BCCSU:

*Recommendation 1: Implement a standard practice of care in addressing addiction and addiction recovery.*

*Recommendation 2: Offer addiction recognition training and continued education in addiction medicine to all health care professionals.*

We understand that Mr. Salvany Sailes' death was precipitated by a relapse to methamphetamine use that resulted in him being asked to cease participation as a mentor at Last Door Recovery Society. This contributed to a decline in his mental health status and ongoing methamphetamine use as evident by post mortem toxicology reports. We agree that implementing standards of care and guidance for how to respond to these challenging situations is important for substance use treatment centres. The Ministries are currently working to strengthen the safety, quality, and oversight of substance use recovery services in the province. We want to ensure that first and foremost recovery facilities and residences are putting the client at the centre of services. This includes ensuring staff have support in assessing individual needs and are supporting safe referrals and transitions to alternative services when required. We are committed to ensuring our work is informed by people with lived experience and families who have identified the need for improved access to quality services and are also working in partnership with clinical experts and leaders in the sector. Taking action on this issue is an important step in BC's plan to build a better system of substance use and addictions care across the province.

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We also recognize the importance of increasing the level of substance use and addiction education available to health professionals. All Health Authorities now have a dedicated addiction medicine lead and are taking action to strengthen clinical capacity for substance use and addiction. In addition, the BC Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) offers education and clinical care guidance for health care professionals with the goal of strengthening clinical leadership and expertise in substance use and addiction. The BCCSU Interdisciplinary Addiction Fellowship Program is currently training 27 new clinicians that will help to lead the treatment of substance use disorders in their communities upon completion of the program.

We also want to acknowledge the third recommendation made for Last Door Recovery Society and all Health Authorities:

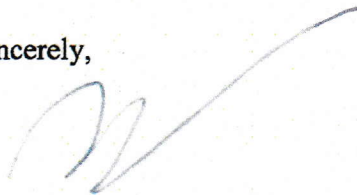
*Recommendation 3: Re-examine the importance of mental health treatment in regards to addiction recovery, and to make available mental health services on-site to support clients.*

Information available suggests that Mr. Salvany Sailes had complex mental health needs and ongoing substance use that contributed towards his death while living on his own in the community. Both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions are committed to working with Health Authorities and individual service providers to improve access to mental health care for those accessing substance use treatment. The types and levels of care available in the recovery sector vary significantly between services, and suitability of clients for a specific environment is a key factor in the care they receive. The work underway to strengthen oversight and quality of recovery services includes supporting clients and families to better access to information to guide their care decisions.

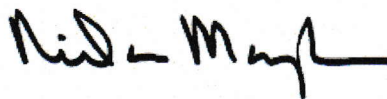
Going forward the Ministry of Health will collaborate with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to provide support for Health Authorities to continue to improve access to needed services for individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

We appreciate the work of the BC Coroners Service in providing recommendations to work towards preventing future tragedies and thank you again for this opportunity to respond.

Sincerely,



Steve Brown  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Health



Neilane Mayhew  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions