

Shoemaker Proposes 'Community Day of Action' as Part of Effort to Address Opioid Crisis

By **Content Team** - August 17, 2022 @ 8:08 am



With the opioid and addictions crisis continuing to weigh heavily on the community, mayoral candidate Matthew Shoemaker today proposed that the City should organize a community-wide Day of Action as part of the effort to address the epidemic. If elected in October, Shoemaker is committing to

see the Day of Action organized within the first six months of the new Council term.

"While there are a number of public activities that could be held, I envision the Day of Action as an open-to-everyone event hosted by the City at GFL Memorial Gardens. I would also seek to have the City offer free transit service on the day to help make the event accessible to all community members," said Shoemaker.



The agenda for the public events and associated media campaign would be decided collaboratively with local partner organizations. As a starting point, Shoemaker suggested that the day would cover topics including:

- Presentations from local mental health and addictions providers about how to access their services;

- How to recognize the signs of an overdose and what to do in response;
- An overview of naloxone and how to use it;
- Information on where and how to obtain a free naloxone kit; and, most importantly,
- Stories from persons with lived experiences who have been affected by opioids and addictions.

Said Shoemaker, “With this initiative, one of the most powerful things we could do would be to centre the voices of people who’ve been directly affected by opioids and addiction, in a way that is free of stigma and judgement. As a community, we could use this day to show that we support each other, that we empathize with each other, and that we are all going to commit to working together to find solutions and make things better.”

Shoemaker sees his Day of Action concept as one that fits within the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan developed by the Algoma Leadership Table. The mental health and addictions section of the work plan includes a public education and awareness component with goals that would align with the Day of Action. However, he also acknowledges that much more needs to happen to address the ongoing crisis.

“As Mayor, I will be ready to support our partners on the frontlines and in the grassroots who are already doing such great and important work,” said Shoemaker. “I intend to commit full municipal support for a supervised consumption site and I will lobby tirelessly for more mental health and addictions funding from the Provincial and Federal governments. By working together, we can find new approaches to prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and enforcement that will make a difference and lead to a safer, healthier, and happier community.”

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