



MACP Position – Decriminalization of Illicit Drugs

The Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police understands that there is a growing body of evidence suggesting that decriminalization is an effective way to mitigate the harms of substance use and the policies and practices used to deal with it, especially those harms associated with criminal justice prosecution for simple possession. Decriminalization is not a single approach, but a spectrum of principles, policies and practices that can be implemented in various ways and includes the decriminalization for simple possession of illicit drugs as well as diversion programs and treatment.

The Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police endorse and support the following recommendations:

- **that Canada proceed with the decriminalization for simple possession of illicit drugs.** This means that drug possession remains illegal, but the nature of the penalty for possessing a small or predetermined amount of drugs for personal consumption is either reduced/changed from a criminal conviction to a fine or other type of sanction. Decriminalization does not mean legalization. This approach recognizes that addiction is not a crime, it is a public health issue.
- **that enforcement resources and strategies continue to be targeted at organized crime groups and individuals who import, produce, or distribute illegal drugs** throughout our communities. These activities continue to be criminal offences and police services should remain committed to combatting organized crime and disrupting the supply of harmful substances.
- **that the adoption of a health-based diversionary approach should be considered.** This means removing mandatory criminal sanctions and replacing them with alternatives that promote access to harm reduction and treatment services. A substance use disorder is not a crime but a public health issue.