

Policy Committee Meeting

June 2, 2020 – 6:00pm MST

Minutes

Present: D. Martell A. Nidumolu A. Hamilton C. Cull B. Watts
 P. Leger A. Bahji B. Hebert (recorder)

Absent: R. Tanguay N. Ali V. Primeau C. McPherson S. Dama

Call To Order: 6:02pm MST – D. Martell

Adoption of Agenda & Additions:

- No additions
- Agenda adopted and approved

Review of Last Minutes (Appendix 1)

- Minutes from February 12, 2020 have been accepted and approved

Round Table Discussion:

- D. Martell would like to implement this introduction at the beginning of each meeting to maintain connection within the committee
- Everyone introduced themselves, stated where they are currently working from and a good thing that happened to them today

Housekeeping Items:

- If you have a topic of discussion for the agenda, they are to be submitted in a form of a question to D. Martell and/or B. Hebert prior to the meeting
- After each Policy Committee Meeting one of the Committee members will be tasked to read the meeting minutes along with D. Martell
 - That person will be identified during each meeting. Participation is voluntary

- Note: All members are expected to read the previous meeting minutes and are free to give input or make corrections
- D. Martell is to review all action items from the previous meeting and contact the committee member tasked with the action item within 2 weeks of the meeting.
- Discuss how frequently we should be meeting and why we should meet – Tabled

New Business:

1. Advocacy For Decriminalization – A. Hamilton (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/B5DHW69>)
 - Letter developed by 3 core Agencies – Pivot Legal Society, Canadian HIV/Aids Legal Network and Canadian Drug Policy Coalition
 - The letter is asking the Federal Government to have an exemption under the Canadian legislation that will decriminalize simple drug possession
 - A. Hamilton - The difference between decriminalization and regulation is that decriminalization is more of the possession side (sale of drug is illegal, but possess drugs is not)
 - A. Hamilton - We currently have a random approach to what is legalized and what is not
 - A. Hamilton - Addiction itself is self harm, criminal law is to protect people from other people, not protect people from themselves
 - Ex) Prior to 1972 in Canada it was illegal to attempt suicide (we learned that this is not a criminal act, it is an act the requires support)
 - Substance use disorder is the same thing, it also requires support
 - In 2014 CSAM had a position paper on decriminalization – CSAM has gone from supporting to not knowing what to do
 - D. Martell - what is the action that A. Hamilton would like to come out of this?
 - Would like to see CSAM adopt as a policy - Canada should decriminalise possession of drugs for personal use
 - Policy Committee to ask the CSAM Board of Directors for support/approval
 - An adoption of this letter or the Policy Committee can create their own version

- The CSAM Policy Committee lay dormant for at least two years before D. Martell had stepped up and chaired the committee. Before that, there was no real structure, format or process for these types of requests
- Editor of CJA (Nady El-guebaly) has asked multiple times if this committee will write policy for publication
- This committee can put out policy statements and endorsements - need support of the membership or at least guidance from the executive about what specific policies need to involve consultation with the wider membership
- B. Watts – Let us start the process in a way that makes sense to us and the current committee
- Thoughts on the letter from the Committee:
 - A. Nidumolu – Timeless message in the time of Covid
 - Regarding this policy they decided to seize on this moment because of the extra problems due to Covid – 19
 - Toronto public health to adopt this policy
 - Do not want this to be temporary, we want it to be permanent
 - Crucial that the CSAM BOD is involved and endorses it
- The CSAM BOD will have their next BOD meeting at the end of June – Have this policy statement on that agenda for them to discuss
- P. Leger - How do we move forward with this proposal?
 - What is the process moving forward and on how we work on future proposals?
 - Is there some type of exception to move more quickly on this one because there is no process?
- D. Martell – In respects to the process, CSAM has a new strategic direction and very clear guiding principals to be followed
 - Committee is shown strategic framework infographic
- A. Bahji – An evidence policy brief fits in with the CJA – with this type of submission you do not actually need a stamp of approval

- The CCSA put up something similar last June – Good paper to reference, but they did not take a position, they just laid out the options – the conclusion was saying that there is growing evidence. Fair statement but not satisfying
- Word count limit for a policy brief in the CJA is 1500 – A. Bahji to confirm
- Next Steps:
 - A. Bahji – Start on a rough draft and provide to the Committee by Monday
 - To be put on a google doc so all members of the committee can edit/comment in real time
 - Email any ideas to A. Bahji to help him start the paper
 - Have completed by June 19th, 2020 to present to the CSAM BOD at their next meeting at the end of June

2. Safe Supply Developments – C. McPherson

- Tabled till next meeting – C. McPherson not present

3. New/Other Business

- No new business
- A. Hamilton to review the minutes – B. Hebert to send

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 6pm MST – B. Hebert to send out call in information

Adjournment: 7:01pm MST – D. Martell

Action Items

ALL

- Review/suggest/edit rough draft of the position paper

Dave Martell

- Review meeting minutes

Angie Hamilton

- Create and circulate different definitions (decriminalization, regulating, etc.) to understand the terminology
- Review meeting minutes

Anees Bahji

- Write first draft of the policy statement – have completed by Monday, June 8, 2020
- Share the first draft in a google drive so other committee members can comment and edit