



## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **BCCLA APPLAUDS SUPREME COURT DECISION IN SAFE INJECTION FACILITY CASES**

The BCCLA applauds the decision of the BC Supreme Court which granted a supervised injection facility, Insite, located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a permanent constitutional exemption from prosecution under federal drug laws. Mr. Justice Ian Pitfield ruled that sections of Canada's drug laws against possession and trafficking in illegal narcotics were unconstitutional.

The BCCLA was an intervenor in the cases, *PHS Community Services Society v. Canada (Attorney General)* and *Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users v. Canada (Attorney General)*.

Ryan Dalziel, counsel for the BCCLA: "This is a major victory for social justice in the Downtown Eastside. The Court has decided that the government cannot deny drug addicts access to the health care that they desperately need, and that Insite provides. This decision is an important step toward bringing to an end the criminalization of disadvantage and disease."

Grace Pastine, Litigation Director for the BCCLA: "The BCCLA has a long-standing commitment to advocating for safe and sensible drug policies. Public health mechanisms are the strongest methods for reducing the harms associated with addiction. We applaud the court's finding that drug addiction is an illness, and that Insite provides a vital health care service and saves lives."

Insite is jointly operated by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the Portland Hotel Society. Insite provides supervised and sanitary conditions for the use of intravenous drugs. Insite has successfully reduced the health risks associated with addiction to such drugs. Research has found that the operation of Insite has prevented overdose deaths, reduced the suffering of addicts and lessened the spread of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. Insite operated pursuant to an exemption from the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The exemption was granted by the federal Minister of Health, and was due to expire at the end of June.

Ryan Dalziel and Daniel Webster, Q.C. are counsel for the BCCLA. Both are of the firm Bull, Houser & Tupper LLP.

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