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## PRESS RELEASE

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## VANCOUVER'S VOICE CANDIDATES CALL FOR PREVENTATIVE MEASURES TO TACKLE DRUGS AND CRIME

*Vancouver* -- City Council candidates from Vancouver's Voice, the COPE/Green/Independent Team, are calling for preventative measures to get at the roots of Vancouver's crime and drug problems. Council candidates Ann Livingston (Green Party), Paul McDonell (Independent), Bud Osborn (COPE) and Andrea Rolls (COPE), and Vancouver's Voice mayoralty candidate David Cadman, appeared in front of Vancouver's Firehall #2, at Main and Cordova. Firehall #2 is the city's busiest, and along with two other downtown firehalls responds to 37% of the city's drug overdose calls.

"We need a two-pronged approach to dealing with drugs and crime," said Paul McDonell, who spent 35 years with the Vancouver Fire Department and was Chief of Operations at retirement. "Drug use is a health issue. Users need secure housing, counselling and education, and treatment that works. Drug dealing, on the other hand, is a crime issue. Millions of dollars in stolen goods pass through Vancouver's pawnshops every week. Property crime is a massive problem city-wide."

"Emergency response is expensive, and we're spending a lot of resources on repeat patients," said David Cadman. "Last year taxpayers spent almost \$140,000 on Narcan, an anti-OD drug that costs \$180 per dose. It costs \$1 million a year to put 15 police officers on the street. These funds could be better spent on proactive measures that help break the cycle of addiction."

"We need to implement harm reduction strategies -- well-researched, effective interventions -- to keep people alive, and help them access services," said Ann Livingston. "And we need to build treatment facilities. Detox is a revolving door if you don't back it up with long-term residential treatment, community support, and adequate housing."

"I am not for legalization, but I do support many of the harm reduction methods which have been implemented successfully in other countries," said Bud Osborn. "Wisdom comes from collective discussion. I am in favour of facing our collective drug problems, particularly where the young are concerned, together, with our eyes open."

"There are huge social costs attached to drug and crime problems," said Andrea Rolls. "Many drug users have families and children who are also affected. Society bears the costs of family violence, of children who are taken into care, of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C spreading throughout the city."

"This isn't just a Downtown Eastside problem," said McDonell. "I've been to ODs in all parts of this city: in Shaughnessy, in Kerrisdale, in Point Grey. It's a city-wide problem."