

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS

Human Rights Tribunal Accepts Discrimination Complaint by Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs (CAPUD) Against Vancouver Canucks Owner and Developer Aquilini Investment Group and Global Commercial Real Estate Firm CBRE Limited

For Media Release:

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The British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal has accepted the Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs' (CAPUD's) human rights complaint against Aquilini Investment Group (Aquilini), real estate developer, commercial landlord, and owner of the Vancouver Canucks, and CBRE Limited, a global commercial real estate firm. This discrimination complaint has been filed in response to Aquilini's refusal to lease office space to CAPUD.

CAPUD is a non-profit society that seeks solutions to the ongoing devastating overdose crisis, by representing and raising the voice of people who use(d) drugs throughout Canada in drug and health policy discussions. CAPUD is made up of members in nine provinces, all of whom are current or former drug users.

The reason for denying the lease stated to CAPUD Executive Director Jordan Westfall, by the CBRE realtor negotiating with Aquilini, was the "optics" to other potential tenants of renting to a drug user group. This followed a series of questions, relayed by the realtor, purportedly from Aquilini, asking "will you be having active users visiting the office", "to confirm no drugs will be on site", and that "visitors to the office will be related to the advocacy and prevention of drug use". The realtor further asked "these active users, will they be 'strung out'. The landlord's [Aquilini's] big concern is regarding people who may agitated [sic] and act an [sic] inappropriate manner to visitors/tenants of the building or make them feel unsafe/uncomfortable".

"That Aquilini and CBRE would engage in this conduct, against a group advocating for vulnerable people who use(d) drugs, while Canada is in the grips of a public health crisis with more than 8000 apparent opioid deaths is both shocking and demoralizing" says Westfall. "It is particularly, disappointing as CAPUD was consulted for the 'Stop Overdose BC' anti-stigma campaign that the Vancouver Canucks are involved with. Publicly, Aquilini is against stigmatizing people who use drugs, but privately, when we tried to lease office space, they hypocritically discriminated against CAPUD and all people who use(d) drugs." The "stopoverdose.gov.bc.ca" campaign announced in January 2018, is a partnership between the Canucks and the British Columbia Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.

CAPUD looks forward to the Human Rights Tribunal process as an opportunity to restore the dignity and self-worth of people who use(d) drugs which was denied by Aquilini's and CBRE's actions and to shine a light on the continuing issue of discrimination against people who use(d) drugs and its consequences in worsening the overdose crisis.

CAPUD is represented by Power Law / Juristes Power in this complaint.

The complaint is available [here](#).

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