

Application for a section 56(1) exemption under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* S.C. 1996, c. 19

January 19, 2020

By email - confidential

TO:

The Honourable Minister, Patty Hajdu

Minister of Health

Government of Canada

Email address: Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca

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AND TO:

Exemptions Section - Authorizations Division

Office of Controlled Substances, Health Canada

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FROM:

Master Corporal Scott Atkinson

17 Kent St.

Smith Falls, ON K7A 1B5

Email: scott.atkinson007@gmail.com

Dear Honourable Minister,

Re: Master Corporal Scott Atkinson's s. 56 application

I am applying for an exemption under s. 56(1) of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* S.C. 1996, c.19 ("*CDSA*") from section 4 of the *CDSA* to permit me to possess psilocybin mushrooms for psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy and related medicinal uses. A letter of support from my physician, Dr. Michael Verbora of Field Trip is attached.

I am 48 years of age. I am a 25 year military veteran and served active tours in Yugoslavia and Afghanistan twice. My active duty tours were an intense, emotionally scarring experience. I witnessed terrible suffering and many people die. I saw people with limbs blown off crawling away from explosions. I attended at prisoner-of-war camps where prisoners had been tortured and murdered. I had numerous friends commit suicide.

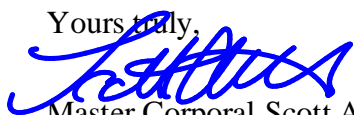
In 2017-2018 I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I have also been diagnosed with Treatment Resistant Depression, Treatment Resistant Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder with Agoraphobia, and Chronic Pain Syndrome. I would experience anxiety all day, most days. I would worry about anything and everything. I could not watch the news because it caused me anxiety. I had trouble sleeping. I had flashbacks. I had panic attacks at least once a week in which I experienced feelings of severe anxiety, shaking, heart palpitations, and sometimes nausea. This put a great strain on my marriage. I need my wife. She is my care-giver. It impaired my relationships with my adult children. I worked with other veterans and it undermined my work relationships.

I have tried everything that has ever been suggested to me. This includes psychotherapy, exercise programs, physiotherapy, meditation/mindfulness training, chiropractic care, massage therapy, sleep coaching and pharmaceutical drugs such as Lyrica, Cymbalta, Codeine, Xanax, Zoloft, Effexor, Morphine, Hydromorphone, Cipralext, Trazadone, Tramadol, Aripiprazole, Nabilone, Wellbutrin, Amitriptyline, Doxepin, Mirtazapine, Ketamine and Medical Cannabis. These treatments have not provided the relief or success as intended. I have had numerous assessments by psychiatrists and am deemed treatment resistant. Medical cannabis helped somewhat, but it was a band aid. It could cover up my problems for short periods of time, but my problems always returned.

In or around March-April 2019 I started using psilocybin mushrooms to treat my mental health issues. It has dramatically improved my outlook. The depression and the anxiety have significantly diminished. The panic attacks are almost non-existent. I feel peace and happiness now for the first time since I was young. I have learned about myself and am able to put my current life in perspective. Issues that used to cause me severe depression and/ or anxiety do not seem like big issues. That is because they are not big issues, but I could not see that before. My relationship with my wife and my adult children is dramatically better. My relationship with the other veterans that I work with is better. As a result, I am now much better at my job. My quality of life is significantly improved.

I am prepared to assume any health risks associated with respect to possession and use of psilocybin mushrooms. I would like to use psilocybin mushrooms legally. It bothers me that I am not in compliance with the law when I possess psilocybin. It is also my hope that possessing it legally would permit me to use it under the care of a licensed psychotherapist. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,



Master Corporal Scott Atkinson

Enclosure