

# Doctors back up mayor's program for drug addicts

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Would replace illegal substances with prescriptions



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Three prominent doctors are backing Vancouver Mayor Sam Sullivan's plan to establish a substitution treatment trial for drug addicts.

Doctors David Marsh, Perry Kendall and John Blatherwick have agreed to provide advice and leadership.

"This offers an alternative that might work," said Blath-

## major controversy

► The controversial trial would replace an addict's illegal drugs with prescription ones.

► Eventually the user would be weaned off the drugs completely.

erwick, chief medical health officer for Vancouver Coastal Health.

"We got a politician sticking his neck out, the least we could do as medical advisers is make sure it is developed."

Lois Johnson, executive director of Inner Change, the non-profit society developed to manage the proposed trial,

said the doctors' endorsement is a positive step.

"Their advice and support for the project is really important to the clinical trial portion of it," she said.

But Brenda Plant, executive director for Turning Point Recovery Society, which provides residential recovery, said it is too early to judge the project.

"Drug substitution treatment is a relatively new initiative and it remains to be seen what impact it will have," she said.

"What is really important is the fact that treatment does work. People do recover from addiction."