Canada’s Opioid Crisis
Overview and federal actions

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The opioid crisis is one of the most serious public health crises in recent memory

From Jan. to Sept. 2018** …

Canada 3,286

** Data from British Columbia and available data from Quebec for 2017 (July to December) and 2018 include deaths related to all illegal drugs including, but not limited to, opioids.

Opioid-related deaths from Jan. 2016 to Sept. 2018

Compared to...

HIV/AIDS 1987-1999 13,255

H1N1 2009-2010 428

SARS 2002-2003 44

Source: PHAC, Statistics Canada
As the crisis continues, its complexity is emerging

**Contamination of the illegal drug supply**
- Approximately three quarters of accidental apparent opioid-related overdose deaths involved fentanyl or analogues

**Poly-substance use**
- 76% of accidental apparent-opioid overdose deaths from Jan 2016 to June 2018 involved one or more types of non-opioid substances
- Use of non-opioid substances (e.g., methamphetamine) is increasingly common at Supervised Consumption Sites

**Use of drugs alone and in private residences**
- A national epidemiology study from the Public Health Agency of Canada observed that those who fatally overdosed were frequently alone
- Data from BC show that 62% of fatal overdoses occurred in private residences

Source: PHAC, CIHI, BCCDC
Federal Approach to Canada’s Opioid Crisis

Upstream activities
- Social inequities
- Trauma
- Stigma

Downstream activities
- Acute Overdose Response
- Harm Reduction
- Treatment

- Compassionate enforcement and regulation
- Education & Awareness
- Evidence
Stigma is a barrier to accessing services, health care and treatment for people who use drugs

- Canada’s international efforts in this area include:
  - Leading the development of UN-CND resolution 61/11; adopted by consensus at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2018
  - UN-Office on Drugs and Crime partnership to host an expert working group meeting, to develop recommendations for best practices
  - Fully engaging and leveraging insights from people with lived and living experience with drug use

- Canada’s domestic efforts in this area include:
  - Launching national awareness and public education campaigns
  - Training for law enforcement officers
  - Working with health professionals to reduce barriers caused by stigma
Increasing access to HARM REDUCTION

1. Approved 40 **supervised consumption sites** and enabled establishment of **temporary overdose prevention sites**
   - Canada is a leader in SCS/OPS access…
   - Authorized drug checking technologies at these sites

2. Making **naloxone** more widely available without a prescription and promoting its availability:
   - Included with standard First Aid Training
   - Broad access & distribution free of charge
   - Providing take home naloxone kits for inmates being released

3. Exploring interventions to provide a **Safe Supply**
   - A safer supply of predictable, prescribed opioids can reduce the dependence of people who use drugs on a contaminated drug supply
   - We have invested in two pilot projects and have committed funds for more projects
   - An expert implementation team is drafting guidance for service providers to integrate safer opioid supply into their clinical offerings
Increasing access to TREATMENT

• Improved access to treatment services through an Emergency Treatment Fund for provinces and territories

• Supporting the development of a national treatment guideline for injectable opioid agonist treatment

• Facilitated methadone prescribing and the use of medical heroin to fully support low barrier treatment, including nurse-led models of care

• Recently approved an indication for injectable hydromorphone for the treatment of substance use disorder

• Allowed the import of medications, not yet authorized in Canada, for urgent public health needs
All of these interventions are based on EVIDENCE

- The Canadian Drug and Substances Strategy is grounded in evidence

- Canada is pleased to support the methodology and findings from this inaugural OECD Report on the opioid crisis
  - The Report confirms and aligns with our comprehensive approach

- This Report is a good example of how international organizations can facilitate the translation of evidence into policies and practice

- Canada looks forward to collaborating on future OECD initiatives
More information

Canada.ca/opioids

Find information about:

**Opioids**
Opioids relieve pain. Used properly they can often help. But problematic use can cause dependence, overdose and death.

**Opioid overdose**
Overdose risks and signs: how to respond.

**Naloxone**
Where to get a naloxone kit.

**Supervised consumption sites**
Find requirements, guidance, locations.

**Stigma**
Defining stigma and why it matters.

**Government response**
Our comprehensive, collaborative, compassionate and evidence-based response.

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