

February 22, 2023

The ongoing opioid crisis has impacted nearly every community across Ontario. Opioid use and overdose are a public health concern in Brantford-Brant. Between 2017 and 2021, Brant's overdose death rate has been consistently above the provincial average.ⁱ Between 2019 and 2020, only about a quarter of fatal incidents in Brant occurred when there was another individual present. Only half of these deaths involved a resuscitation attempt, and, in the majority, the opioid overdose antidote naloxone was not given.ⁱⁱ

The Brant County Health Unit (BCHU), along with the Board of Health, supports opening a Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) site in Brantford-Brant and is working alongside community partners to achieve this goal.

Ensuring that people who use drugs are not using alone, and moreover, are using in the presence of individuals with specialized training on resuscitation and naloxone use could help prevent overdose deaths in Brant.

CTS sites, also known as safe consumption spaces, are places where people can go to use drugs indoors in a safe, clean facility, and where overdoses can be reversed by professional healthcare providers. People who use drugs can also access other services through CTS sites, such as primary care and drug treatment.ⁱⁱⁱ As of early 2020, Canada had 39 operational CTS sites. Between 2017 and 2019 these sites attended 15,000 overdose and drug-related emergencies. Zero of these incidents resulted in death.^{iv}

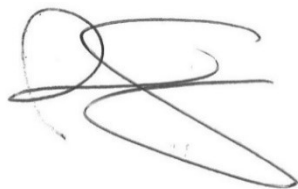
The public health benefits of CTS sites go beyond saving lives; services offered at CTS sites also help link people to treatment, healthcare and other services.^v Between 2017 and 2019, Canadian CTS sites made roughly 70,000 referrals to substance use treatment, medical care, mental health support, housing services and other health and social services.^{vi}

CTS sites help reduce HIV, Hepatitis C and injection-related infection within the communities they serve.^{vii} There is no evidence that CTS sites lead to increased drug use,^{viii} and research of existing CTS sites does not indicate that they drive an increase in crime in surrounding areas.^{ix}

CTS sites can also improve community health and safety. In both 2020 and 2021, Brant's rate of emergency department visits for opioid overdoses was nearly twice the provincial rate.^x CTS sites help reduce the strain on emergency responders, freeing them up to address other issues.^{xi} They can also reduce drug consumption in public spaces, such as restaurant bathrooms, parks and parking garages.^{xii} When people use drugs at a CTS site, they are able to dispose of used syringes and other supplies safely and indoors; thus, opening a CTS site could increase the safe disposal of drug use supplies in Brant.^{xiii}

I, Dr. Rebecca Comley, along with the BCHU Board of Health, believe a CTS site would be both appropriate and beneficial for our jurisdiction and would go a long way to assist those in our community to both use drugs safely and seek the care needed.

Sincerely,



Dr. Rebecca Comley,
Acting Medical Officer of Health



Susan Brown
Chair, Board of Health

ⁱ Brantford-Brant Community Drug Strategy Surveillance Working Group. (2022). Opioid Surveillance Report - June 2022. Brantford: Brant County Health Unit.

ⁱⁱ Brant County Health Unit. (2022). Characteristics of Opioid Related Deaths in Brant, 2019-2021. Brantford: Brant County Health Unit.

ⁱⁱⁱ Health Canada. (2021, July 22). Supervised consumption sites and services: Explained. Retrieved from Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/supervised-consumption-sites/explained.html>

^{iv} Government of Canada. (2020, July 21). Canadian Supervised Consumption Sites Statistics — 2017 to 2019. Retrieved from Data Blog: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/datalab/supervised-consumption-sites-blog.html>

^v British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. (2009). Findings from the evaluation of Vancouver's pilot medically supervised safer injection facility – Insite. Vancouver: British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. Retrieved from https://www.bccsu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/insite_report-eng.pdf; Potier, C., Lapr v te, V., DuBois-Arber, F., Cottencin, O., & Rolland, B. (2014). Supervised injection services: what has been demonstrated? A systematic literature review. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 48-68. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25456324/>; Wood, E., Tyndall, M. W., Zhang, R., Montaner, J. S., & Kerr, T. (2007). Rate of detoxification service use and its impact among a cohort of supervised injecting facility users. *Addiction*, 916-919. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2007.01818.x>; DeBeck, K., Kerr, T., Bird, L., Zhang, R., Marsh, D., Tyndall, M., . . . Wood, E. (2011). Injection drug use cessation and use of North America's first medically supervised safer injecting facility. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 172-176. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20800976/>

^{vi} Government of Canada. (2020, July 21). Canadian Supervised Consumption Sites Statistics — 2017 to 2019. Retrieved from Data Blog: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/datalab/supervised-consumption-sites-blog.html>

^{vii} Millroy, M.-J., & Wood, E. (2009). Emerging role of supervised injecting facilities in human immunodeficiency virus prevention. *Addiction*, 620-621. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19335659/>; Hagan, H., Pouget, E. R., & Des Jarlais, D. C. (2011). A systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions to prevent hepatitis C virus infection in people who inject drugs. *Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 74-83. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21628661/>; Ng, J., Sutherland, C., & Kolber, M. R. (2017). Does evidence

support supervised injection sites? Canadian Family Physician, 866. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5685449/>; British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. (2009). Findings from the evaluation of Vancouver's pilot medically supervised safer injection facility – Insite. Vancouver: British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. Retrieved from https://www.bccsu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/insite_report-eng.pdf

^{viii} amfAR Public Policy Office. (2017). Issue Brief: The Case for Supervised Consumption Services. Washington, DC: The Foundation for AIDS Research. Retrieved from <https://www.amfar.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/IB-Supervised-Consumption-Services-061217.pdf>

^{ix} Davidson, P. J., Lambdin, B. H., Browne, E. N., Wenger, L. D., & Kral, A. H. (2021). Impact of an unsanctioned safe consumption site on criminal activity, 2010–2019. Drug and Alcohol Dependence. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0376871621000168>; Livingston, J. D. (2021). Supervised consumption sites and crime: scrutinizing the methodological weaknesses and aberrant results of a government report in Alberta, Canada. Harm Reduction Journal. Retrieved from <https://harmreductionjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12954-020-00456-2>; CBC News. (2019, November 20). Fewer calls for police help near downtown Edmonton safe injection sites. Edmonton, Alberta. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-city-council-safe-injection-sites-crime-rate-1.5367202>

^x Brantford-Brant Community Drug Strategy Surveillance Working Group. (2021). Opioid Surveillance Report - December 2021. Brantford: Brant County Health Unit.

^{xi} Health Canada. (2021, July 22). Supervised consumption sites and services: Explained. Retrieved from Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/supervised-consumption-sites/explained.html>

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^{xiii} Government of Canada. (2020, July 21). Canadian Supervised Consumption Sites Statistics — 2017 to 2019. Retrieved from Data Blog: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/datalab/supervised-consumption-sites-blog.html>; Wood, E., Kerr, T., Small, W., Li, K., Marsh, D. C., Montaner, J. S., & Tyndall, M. M. (2004). Changes in public order after the opening of a medically supervised safer injecting facility for illicit injection drug users. Canadian Medical Association Journal, 731-734. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15451834/>