



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 10, 2018
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Drug Strategy (BOH18015) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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Council Direction:

The Board of Health has received and approved several reports relevant to the Drug Strategy:

- Sept 19, 2016: An information report on A Comprehensive Public Health Approach to Drug and Substance Misuse (BOH16035);
- March 20, 2017: An information report on the Opioid Response Summit (BOH17006);
- April 20, 2017: A recommendation report on the Hamilton Opioid Response Provincial and Federal Funding Request (BOH17013), which included a request to support a Drug Strategy for Hamilton; and,
- July 13, 2017: A recommendation report on the Provincial Opioid Response Initiative Funding (BOH17028), which approved the use of funds to hire a Drug Strategy Coordinator.

Information:

The Hamilton Drug Strategy (HDS) is a city-wide collaboration to address the harms associated with substance use experienced by individuals, families and the community. HDS involves key stakeholders and members of the community to identify and address systems-level gaps, and to implement evidence-based practices to ensure all individuals can live their best quality of life. The City of Hamilton is a partner in this

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community driven strategy and provides administrative and community engagement support through a Senior Project Manager and Health Promotion Specialist.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the HDS, a status update on progress to date, and to provide an overview of the areas of focus for future action.

History of the Hamilton Drug Strategy

The HDS evolved in response to the Mayor's 2017 call to action regarding the rising number of opioid-related deaths in Hamilton. A stakeholder group quickly formed to take action in reducing opioid mortality and morbidity, and was a catalyst for a more comprehensive approach to addressing multiple substances and related harms in Hamilton. In 2017, Public Health Services (PHS) received funding from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) to address the opioid crisis in Hamilton and part of this funding was used to coordinate a city-wide drug strategy (BOH17028). Consistent with other drug strategies across the province, the HDS used the four pillar framework of the 2016 Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy¹ as an overarching approach to guide the strategy formation. The four pillar approach focuses on:

1. Prevention;
2. Treatment;
3. Enforcement/social justice; and,
4. Harm reduction (BOH16035).

In addition, the HDS is focusing on the importance of accessible, affordable, and safe housing and data driven actions.

Overview of the Hamilton Drug Strategy

The HDS kicked off at the Hamilton Drug Strategy Summit in March 2018 which highlighted the need for a comprehensive drug strategy including building collaboration among community partners. The goal of the HDS is to ensure that residents of Hamilton are free of harm due to substance use and can enjoy the best quality of life. To realize this goal the strategy aims to:

- Prevent and reduce alcohol/drug use among youth;
- Reduce deaths and poisonings due to alcohol/drugs;
- Divert people who use alcohol/drugs from entering the criminal justice system to receive appropriate care; and,
- Provide supports for people who use alcohol/ drugs in the criminal justice system for harm reduction, treatment and rehabilitation.

The HDS capitalizes on the existing strengths of Hamilton's mental health and addictions system and the assets already present in our community. The HDS will strive to provide an integrated and comprehensive approach, and to connect community agencies, strategies and programs to reduce the impact of substance use in the community.

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The HDS is comprised of a community member network including with a steering committee and four working groups focused on action in the areas of:

- Prevention;
- Harm reduction;
- Social justice/justice; and,
- Treatment.

See Appendix A for a diagram of the HDS structure.

Overview of the Hamilton Drug Strategy Working Groups

Each working group has identified priority areas of focus and draft actions plans. The draft action plan is currently undergoing community consultations which include:

- A survey with 250 members of community with lived experience;
- Key informant reviews; and,
- Presentations to, and feedback from, key stakeholder groups.

Feedback from the consultations will be incorporated into the action plans and priority activities will be identified for 2019. See Appendix B for a diagram highlighting the HDS development and implementation timelines.

Prevention

The Prevention Work Group is focused on preventing high-risk youth aged 12-24 years old from ever using substances and preventing harmful use of substances among youth who do use. The aims are to:

- Educate youth and provide a culture of moderation;
- Promote low-cost or free extracurricular opportunities;
- Create awareness of youth mental health and addictions support;
- Create opportunities for youth to hear from their peers;
- Enhance parenting skills and educate families on the risk and protective factors for substance use; and,
- Collaborate with educators and service providers to promote resources, training and other initiatives to prevent problematic substance use among high-risk youth.

Harm Reduction

The Harm Reduction Work Group is focused on reducing the harms caused by alcohol and drug use in the community. The aims are to:

- Increase access to harm reduction programs and services;
- Improving coordinated care for individuals moving between institutions (hospitals and correctional facilities), and the community and for those receiving opioid agonist therapies;
- Enhance training for service providers and health care professionals;
- Increase access to addictions specialists in temporary housing; and,
- Provide stigma education to the general community.

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Social Justice/Justice

The Social Justice/Justice Work Group is focused on the continuum of prevention, harm reduction and treatment for individuals who are at-risk for or who are involved in the justice system. The aims are to:

- Support individuals engaged in the justice system by initiating the treatment process during incarceration;
- Increase awareness of, and connecting individuals to community services prior to, and at release from incarceration;
- Investigate opportunities for temporary housing with 24 hour addiction support; and,
- Advocate for funding and expansion of diversion programs.

Treatment

The Treatment Work Group is focused on improving accessibility and quality of care within addiction treatment and rehabilitation services. The aims are to:

- Collaborate with key partners to develop an integrated care pathway to support those dealing with a substance use disorder;
- Train and educate allied health care professionals on a variety of topics such as stigma and continuum of care, including harm reduction, screening, substance use disorder treatment, etc.; and,
- Reinforce family and caregiver supports and skill building opportunities.

Next Steps

Action plans and 2019 priority activities will be finalized by the end of December 2018 for implementation in Q1 2019.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A to Report BOH18015 – Hamilton Drug Strategy Structure

Appendix B to Report BOH18015 – Hamilton Drug Strategy Plan and Deliverables

References

1. Health Canada. (2016). Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy. Ottawa, ON.

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