



# 2019

## Report to the Community

**Our Goal:** All residents of Hamilton are free of harm due to substance use and are able to enjoy the best quality of life.



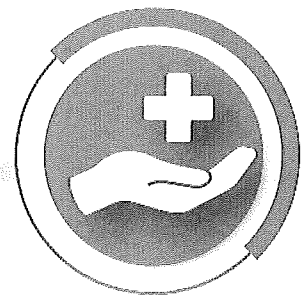
**Prevention**



**Harm  
Reduction**



**Social  
Justice/  
Justice**



**Treatment**



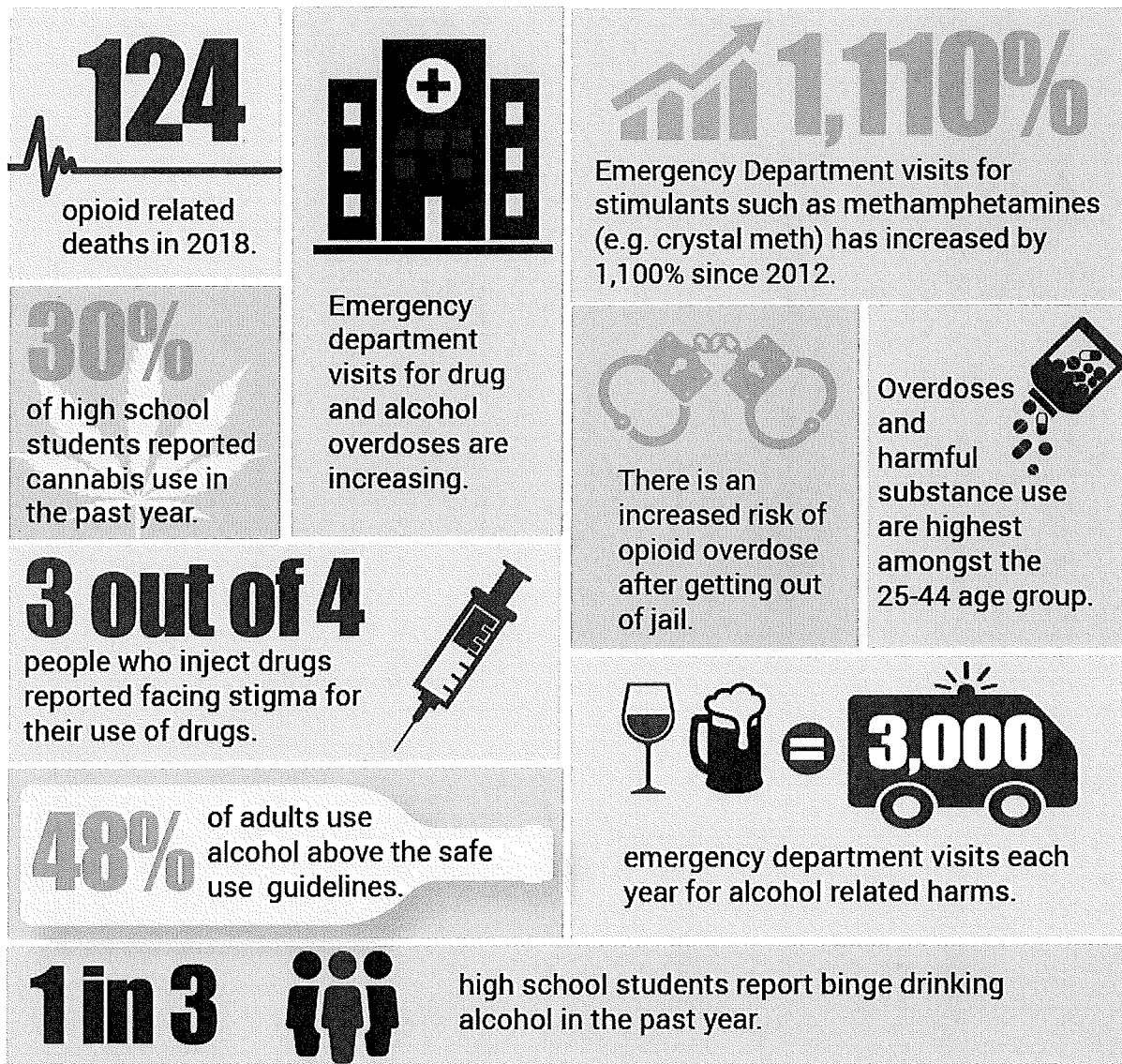
[www.hamilton.ca/drugstrategy](http://www.hamilton.ca/drugstrategy)



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# Our Current State:

In Hamilton substance use has had an impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the community. In addition to the opioid crisis, local data reveals that four other substances of concern include alcohol, cannabis, cocaine and stimulants such as methamphetamines (e.g. crystal meth). Deaths and overdoses for most of these substances are increasing in Hamilton and are higher than the provincial rates.



# Our Strategy:

The purpose of the Hamilton Drug Strategy (HDS) is to build community collaboration and action to shift the way we approach substance use disorders. The strategy uses an evidence-based four-pillar approach:

## Prevent youth aged 12-24 from ever using substances



Prevention

### CURRENT FOCUS

- Increase the skills of staff in schools and youth organizations to teach youth about the harms of substance use

## Reduce the harms caused by substance use in the community



Harm  
Reduction

### CURRENT FOCUS

- Increase access to naloxone to reduce opioid overdoses and deaths
- Reduce the stigma people with substance use disorders face from the public and service providers to improve their chances of seeking harm reduction support

## Increase access to community services for people involved in the justice system



Social  
Justice/  
Justice

### CURRENT FOCUS

- Increase access to diversion programs for youth and adults facing substance use related criminal charges
- Increase number of adults transitioning from jail to community support programs
- Increase the diversion of people with drug and alcohol related intoxication from emergency departments to withdrawal services

## Improve access and quality of care for addiction treatment and rehabilitation



Treatment

### CURRENT FOCUS

- Increase the number of service providers who screen, assess and make treatment plans for people with substance use disorders
- Reduce the stigma people with substance use disorders face from service providers to improve their chances of seeking and staying in treatment

# Our Successes

The HDS successes to date are due to a collaboration of over 125 community members and partners. Through the collective actions of the treatment, harm reduction, prevention and social justice/justice work groups and partners, we are working to reach our goals. The following highlights a few of the accomplishments of the HDS work groups and partners in 2019.

## YOUTH-RELATED

- Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board collaborated with Alternatives for Youth to train 221 teachers about **cannabis use and how to have conversations with youth**.
- The Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, in collaboration with City of Hamilton, Public Health Services, and Prevention Workgroup developed curriculum for students in grades 5 to 8 about **cannabis and vaping**.
- McMaster Children's Hospital is collaborating with an academic research team to learn more about the **patterns of substance use for youth** admitted to the Child and Youth Mental Health Unit. The hospital is also developing a youth screening tool to determine if a patient has the potential for substance use withdrawal.
- Good Shepherd Notre Dame House Youth Shelter has partnered with St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton to provide a **five-bed youth substance use program** that annually diverts up to 500 youth from emergency departments into a youth-oriented supportive environment.



Courtesy of Hamilton Youth Engagement Strategy



- Grenfell Ministries, in partnership with Living Rock, supported 10 youth attending a **recovery program** to receive peer support, low barrier access to GAINS (Global Appraisal of Individual Needs) assessment, and linkage with other community treatment and social services.
- McMaster University's Student Wellness Centre provided training to over 1,000 student leaders involved in Welcome Week and Residence Life on harm reduction, including the use of the **Lower Risk Drinking Guidelines and Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines**.

- Over 1,000 youth aged 18-29 accessed services through the City of Hamilton's Xperience Annex, which included a partnership where Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board adult education staff provided weekly **literacy and educational assessments to youth**.
- The City of Hamilton's Xperience Annex youth engagers continue to provide **peer-to-peer support** throughout Hamilton. In January 2020, a new Nurse Navigator will be available two days a week at the Annex to expand access to health services and supports.

“  
What we heard...  
The lack of constructive/  
positive resources/  
programs lead to  
boredom amongst youth  
and absolutely  
contribute to increased  
or earlier substance  
use/abuse  
”

- The City of Hamilton's Youth Engagement Strategy shared information about HDS **events/training sessions** through the @HamOntYouth Instagram account and weekly stakeholder newsletter, This Week in The World of Youth.

- McMaster University's Student Wellness Centre promoted 11 **harm reduction and prevention messages** via lawn signs placed on campus during Welcome Week.
- Between December 24, 2018 and January 21, 2019, the City of Hamilton, Public Health Services distributed over 1000 printed resources through 15 HDS partners and registered 10,204 online engagements through the Use Your Instincts campaign designed to **increase knowledge and shift perceptions among youth around cannabis use**.

“  
What we heard...  
Help at-risk youth be  
educated on the  
dangers of overdosing  
with recreational drugs  
and providing the help  
they deserve  
”

# Our Successes

## HARM REDUCTION

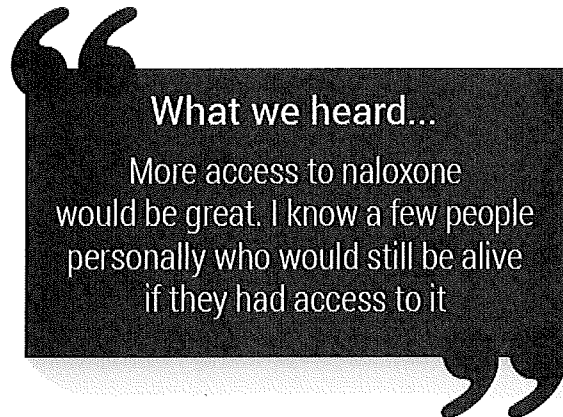


### What we heard...

reducing stigma and educating about  
harm reduction would be helpful



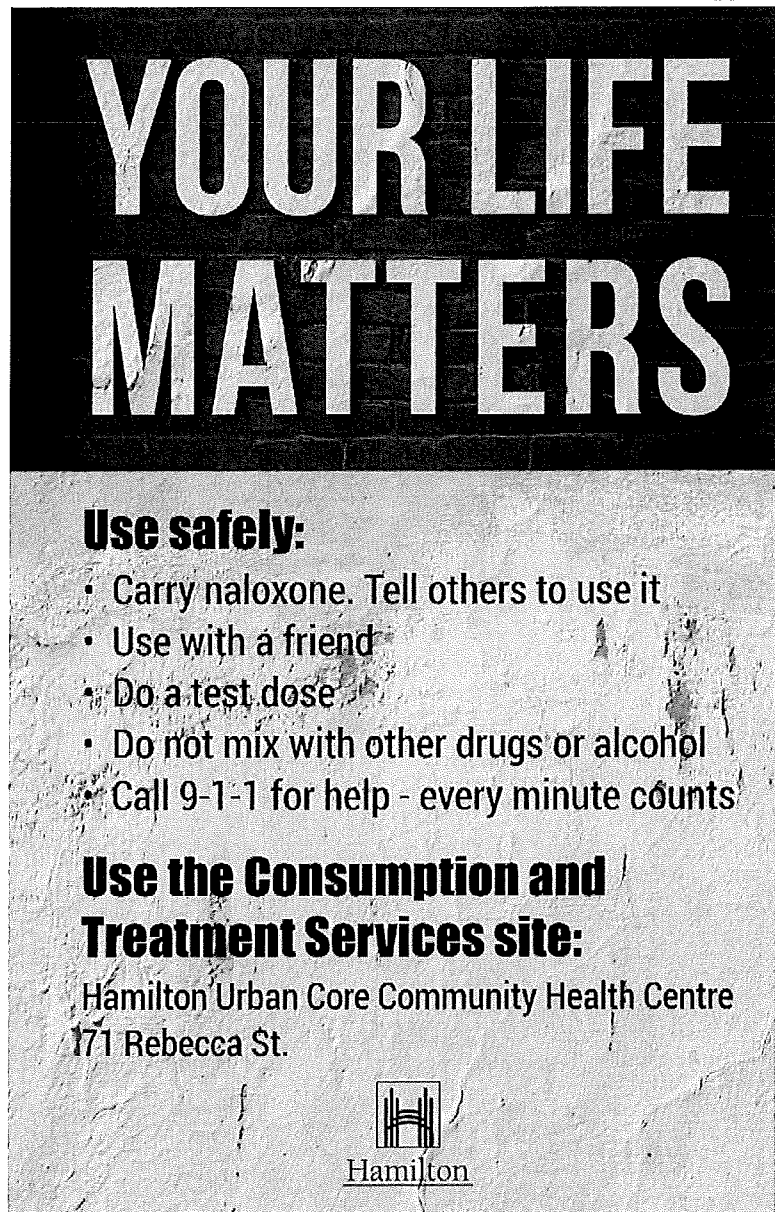
- From April to September 2019, The AIDS Network provided service to 2,947 clients through its **harm reduction programs**, half of whom were new, plus an additional 1,561 individuals through various outreach efforts across Hamilton.
- Since 2018, Hamilton Police Services (HPS) has provided mandatory Naloxone training for frontline officers, which has resulted in the administration of 128 **Naloxone doses and resuscitation** of 67 individuals. Naloxone kits are now accessible in areas with high potential of need, including HPS Court Security areas, Custody areas and the front desk at Central Station.
- City of Hamilton Public Health Services and partner sites distributed 13,381 Naloxone doses which contributed to 1,699 **overdoses being reversed**.
- In a one year period, the AIDS Network, through its harm reduction programs and the VAN/Community Points, provided 383,721 new needles, assisted 47,424 used needles to be returned and logged 5,975 visits at their new harm reduction site at 140 King Street East. From April to September 2019, 2,916 people accessed The AIDS Network's **needle exchange program**.
- City of Hamilton Public Health Services supported 400 individuals incarcerated at the Hamilton Wentworth Detention Centre in receiving **harm reduction and overdose prevention planning education**.



### What we heard...

More access to naloxone  
would be great. I know a few people  
personally who would still be alive  
if they had access to it

- Mission Service's Suntrac Wellness and Addiction Treatment Program provided clients with immediate access to harm reduction **drop-in groups** and other services that, in past, required prior registration.
- McMaster University's Student Wellness Centre's Substance Use peer education team distributed **harm reduction kits** to 200 students in October and with support of City of Hamilton Public Health Services, provided additional **Naloxone training** to students.
- The HDS Harm Reduction Workgroup, in partnership with City of Hamilton Public Health Services, distributed over 1,600 printed resources across Hamilton as part of a relaunch of the **Careful Use Campaign** aiming to reduce opioid related overdoses and deaths.
- Over the Bridge trained over 450 people in **Naloxone delivery** through various local events.
- Grenfell Ministries and Marchese Healthcare are partnering to launch a **peer support opioid overdose telephone line** to help reduce the number of opioid-related deaths due to people using alone. This telephone line is expected to launch in February 2020.
- The HDS Harm Reduction Workgroup, in partnership with City of Hamilton Public Health Services, adapted and distributed **signs to promote Naloxone availability** through local agencies.




# YOUR LIFE MATTERS

**Use safely:**

- Carry naloxone. Tell others to use it
- Use with a friend
- Do a test dose
- Do not mix with other drugs or alcohol
- Call 9-1-1 for help - every minute counts

**Use the Consumption and Treatment Services site:**

Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre  
171 Rebecca St.



Hamilton

# Our Successes

## STIGMA

- Mission Services provides space within its women's programs to address substance use-related stigma and how to create **positive talk about addiction** and mental health.
- Alternatives for Youth hired two additional Youth Substance Use Therapist positions to service sites at the Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton and two secondary schools in the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board. Staff within these sites along with 15 other locations in secondary schools and the community will **reduce stigma and barriers** associated with youth access to services for substance use/addiction concerns.
- The AIDS Network held a focus group in October 2019 where 15 local persons with lived experience provided **input on stigma** related workshop content delivered through the Canadian Public Health Association.
- The AIDS Network hosts two weekly **peer support** volunteer groups where 60 participants make harm reduction kits and share stories, treatment suggestions, and build connections, helping to reduce stigma and social isolation.
- From November 18 to December 21, 2019, the HDS Harm Reduction Workgroup, in partnership with the City of Hamilton, launched the **"See the Person" campaign** to address substance use-related stigma. Over a four-week period, 544 campaign posters and 24 social media kits were distributed through 36 HDS community partners, resulting in 7,226 visits to the webpage, 1,347 likes on social media, and 3,593 views of the campaign's video series on YouTube.

### What we heard...

“

working on  
stigma awareness  
and trauma  
would allow  
more people  
to come forward  
without fear  
of being shamed

”



**No one  
chooses  
addiction**

See the person.  
Learn how to stop stigma.



# Our Successes

## TRAINING

- The HDS Harm Reduction Workgroup partnered with the Canadian Public Health Association to provide **stigma and trauma and violence informed care training** to staff working in social services.
- The Hamilton Family Health Team trained family physicians on the best management of people on **opioids for chronic pain** resulting in a 15% reduction in people receiving high doses of opioids prescriptions over 14 months.
- Hamilton Paramedic Services provided enhanced education to all community paramedics related to mental health and **assessment for substance use**.
- Hamilton Paramedic Services partnered with Hamilton Police Services to train over 840 front line and auxiliary officers in **administering Naloxone**.
- John Howard Society provided all 40 of its staff with **overdose prevention** training.
- Youth Serving Agencies Network (YSAN) surveyed 16 out of 29 youth-serving agencies to **identify training needs** and gaps, expertise, and capacity to deliver training and workshops.
- The City of Hamilton's Xperience Annex, in partnership with Hamilton Health Sciences, delivers a **mental health workshop** twice a year to 60 front line workers dealing with youth with mental health challenges. Since its inception, over 300 staff have been trained through this initiative.
- Mohawk College's **Concurrent Disorders Program** celebrated a total of 50 graduates at its June 2019 convocation. These graduates will go on to work in a variety of social service, harm reduction, health care and addictions treatment agencies.



Photo taken by Wil Fujarczuk

# Our Successes

## JUSTICE SYSTEM AND CONNECTION TO SERVICES



What we heard...

Don't throw people in jail for drugs because they are an addict, give them the help they need as you would someone with cancer or mental health



- Hamilton Police Services, City of Hamilton Paramedic Services, and St. Joseph's Men's Addiction Services Hamilton (MASH) partnered to launch a program in January 2020 to **divert individuals** with mild to moderate intoxication from emergency departments directly to MASH for appropriate withdrawal management care.
- St. Leonard Society Hamilton's **provincial court crisis intervention pilot** launched in November 2019 to help individuals released from provincial court at time served or with one-day sentences access local supports and appropriate services.
- Mission Services, through its adult diversion programs, Hamilton Drug Treatment Court and SURCH (Substance Use Related Crime in Hamilton), supports individuals with substance use related charges to **access programs and services in place of time in custody**.
- John Howard Society provided training to 20 front line individuals with lived experience, who plan to volunteer at the Consumption and Treatment Services site, in **restorative practice**.
- Grenfell Ministries assisted 42 individuals through its Connections in Corrections, Youth Outreach and Care in Kind programs in receiving **wrap around service and connection** to various community services to support their needs.
- The HDS Social Justice/Justice Workgroup updated a service guide to **increase access to community services**.

What we heard...



I applaud any initiative that realizes the criminal justice system is one of the least effective ways to encourage youth to either abstain or to use booze/drugs relatively safely



What we heard...



I think it is important to have more safe housing for addicts



# Our Successes

## ACCESS TO CARE

- City of Hamilton Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Services are now located at Hamilton Health Sciences' General site seven days a week to help individuals who are experiencing addiction issues get better **access and connection to care**. They also provide supports to the Hamilton Urban Core Consumption and Treatment Site for **outpatient counselling and case management support**.
- A new Addictions and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner provides **community-based outreach addictions support** and treatment for those that are limited in their ability to access addiction treatment. Over a five-month period 144 individuals have been visited/assessed that otherwise may not have received supports.
- The Rapid Assessment Addiction Medicine (RAAM) clinic helps those with alcohol and substance use disorders in a timely way by offering **rapid assessment, pharmacological treatment, and connections to community treatment programs**. Since opening the RAAM clinic has served 309 individuals.
- Mission Services Willow's Place, the YWCA's Carole Anne's Place and St. Joseph's Womankind programs have collaborated to offer **emergency services including withdrawal management and access to other supports**, to the more than 260 women in Hamilton who experience homelessness during the coldest months every year.
- From April 1 to September 30, 2019, The AIDS Network referred 180 individuals to **testing services, clinical service providers, mental health agencies, harm reduction and addiction services, and other community-based providers**.
- Wayside House now provides **suboxone and methadone** to their **residential and supportive housing** programs which increased accessibility to those who otherwise would have been denied service.

“

What we heard...

Make treatment  
more accessible

“

What we heard...

There should be better  
communication &  
continuous use of services  
across healthcare centres

”

“

What we heard...

I find it extremely difficult  
to navigate through the  
healthcare/support system  
even with a doctor's  
assistance

”

# What you can do

## BE AWARE

Visit our website to learn more about:

- Why using substances may be a choice for some and an addiction for others
- Why treatment, harm reduction, prevention and social justice/justice are included in the drug strategy
- Resources for family members, caregivers and service providers of those who have a substance use disorder

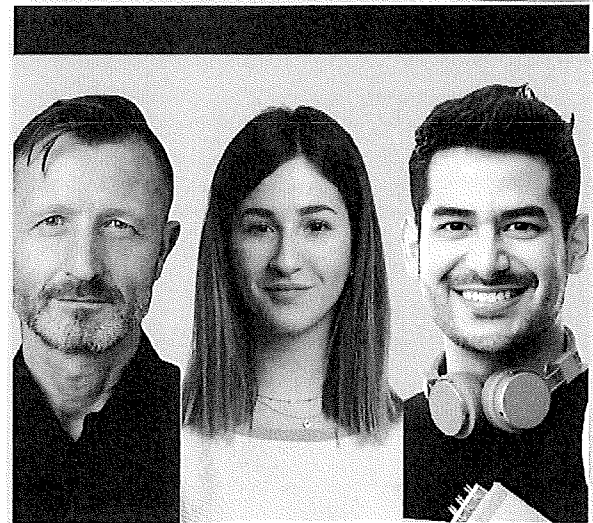
## STOP STIGMA

Addiction or substance use disorders can happen to anyone at any time. There are many negative beliefs about this health issue. We all have a role to play to better understand people who have a substance use disorder.

Visit [www.hamilton.ca/SeeThePerson](http://www.hamilton.ca/SeeThePerson) to see videos featuring personal stories of Hamiltonians affected by substance use stigma or in their practice, along with tips and actions you can take to stop stigma.

## TAKE ACTION

We all can make a difference to support the well-being of everyone in our community. Visit our website to learn more about the HDS and partner actions. Let us know by email what you can do to help us achieve our goals.



**No one  
chooses  
addiction**

**See the person.  
Learn how to stop stigma.**

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