



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 13, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Consumption and Treatment Services Site Application Process (BOH23007) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Melissa Biksa (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6709
SUBMITTED BY:	Julie Prieto Director, Epidemiology and Wellness Division Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not Applicable.

INFORMATION

This information report provides an overview of supervised consumption sites, the application process and the current status of supervised consumption sites within Hamilton.

Supervised Consumption Sites

Supervised Consumption Sites provide a place for people to use substances while in the presence of trained staff. Using substances in a supervised setting reduces the risk of overdose and death from substance use and reduces the spread of blood-borne infections as individuals are provided with new harm reduction supplies each time. In addition to providing a space to use substances, supervised consumption sites offer other wrap-around services, such as connections to health and social services. Evidence has demonstrated that supervised consumption sites are an effective and important intervention to address the harms associated with the current drug poisoning crisis to prevent overdose and death and link people to vital health and social services.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Locally, supervised consumption sites were studied by Hamilton Public Health Services in 2017.¹ The recommendations from the report stated that Hamilton would benefit from one or more supervised consumption sites. Since the study was completed, the harms associated with the drug poisoning crisis have continued to significantly worsen. From January to October 2022, there were 139 confirmed or probable opioid-related deaths in Hamilton². Hamilton's opioid-related yearly death rate has consistently been higher than the provincial rate since opioid crisis began to exponentially increase in 2016. Most recently, rates in Hamilton were 45% higher than in Ontario in 2021,³ but have ranged from 110% higher in 2018 to 30% higher in 2020. Males, aged 25-44 years old, continue to be predominately impacted, and the gap is widening. For example, in 2021 men aged 25-44 years old accounted for 46% of the overdoses compared to 24% in 2012.⁴

Supervised consumption sites permit use of substances via injection, snorting, or orally. Amongst people who use drugs, there has recently been a shift in substance use, with more individuals choosing to inhale substances. Inhalation of substances in a supervised consumption space has not been permitted historically, however, this practice is being explored further due to the change in substance use. The first supervised consumption site for inhalation opened in Toronto at Casey House on November 16, 2022. For any site to allow consumption of substance within their facility they require an exemption to Section 56.1 of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* from Health Canada.

Supervised Consumption Services in Ontario

For organizations wishing to open a supervised consumption site, there are three different streams available currently:

1. Consumption and Treatment Service Sites (CTS)

A CTS site is a provincially-approved supervised consumption site.

Organizations who pursue this option require approval from both the Ontario Ministry of Health and Health Canada. This model was introduced in 2018 and is meant to provide integrated, wrap-around services to primary care, treatment and other health and social services. To operate a site under this

¹ Hamilton Public Health Services (2017). Hamilton Supervised Injection Site: Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study. Retrieved from: <https://pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=138141>

² Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario, received January 20, 2023.

³ Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario, extracted from the Public Health Ontario Interactive Opioid Tool, January 24, 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/substance-use/interactive-opioid-tool#/maps>

⁴ Ambulatory Visits, Ministry of Health, IntelliHealth Ontario, extracted January 2023

model a consumption space must have a defined pathway to addictions treatment services, offer harm reduction services and remove inappropriately discarded harm reduction supplies surrounding the CTS area.⁵ A CTS application is assessed based upon five criteria:

- a) **Local conditions:**
Applicant to demonstrate need for consumption services based upon local health data;
- b) **Capacity to provide treatment and consumption services:**
Applicant to demonstrate the ability to provide the full range of required wrap-around services;
- c) **Proximity:**
Applicant to address the proximity of the proposed site to other supervised consumption services, and to services such as child care centres, parks and schools. If proposed site is within close proximity (100-200m), the applicant must specify how the community concerns will be addressed through consultation and ongoing community engagement;
- d) **Community support and ongoing community engagement:**
Applicant to engage community to inform on CTS, potential impacts to people who use drugs and community and how any concerns will be mitigated; and,
- e) **Accessibility:**
All sites must be compliant with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and must be easily accessible by public transit, and services must be offered in a way that is culturally, demographically and gender appropriate.

As part of the application through the community support section, applicants must obtain support and endorsement from local municipal council.⁶

⁵ Ministry of Health (2023). Consumption and Treatment Services application.

Retrieved from:

https://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/opioids/docs/CTS_application_guide_en.pdf

⁶ Ministry of Health (2023): Consumption and Treatment Services Application.

Retrieved from:

https://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/opioids/docs/CTS_application_guide_en.pdf

If approved, CTS sites receive both capital and operational funding from the province. The province currently has a cap of a maximum of 21 CTS sites in operation within Ontario. There are 17 approved sites currently operating in Ontario. Locations include Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Peterborough, St. Catherine's, Thunder Bay, Guelph, London, Kingston, and Kitchener.

Hamilton has one approved CTS site, which is operated by Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Services. It is temporarily located at 70 James St. South, and will be re-located to 430 Cannon St. East upon completion of their new building.

2. Supervised Consumption Sites

An organization can also open a supervised consumption site with only Health Canada approval, if they do not require operating or capital funding.

Organizations can apply to Health Canada to receive an exemption to section 56.1 of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, which is required to operate a supervised consumption site in Canada. The federal application requires evidence of community consultation, how the applicant plans to address any concerns raised by the community and a letter of opinion from the provincial or territorial health minister.

3. Urgent Public Health Needs Sites

The newest stream available to organizations are Urgent Public Health Needs Sites. These sites are similar to Supervised Consumption Sites, but are set up in an expedited manner on a temporary basis in order to respond to urgent needs in a community. Each province and territory in Canada have been issued a 56.1 class exemption from the *Controlled Drugs and Substance Act* in relation to urgent public health needs and it is the provincial Minister of Health's discretion if they wish to implement the class exemption or not. Currently, Ontario does not have a class exemption in place, and is not overseeing the operation of any Urgent Public Health Needs Sites in Ontario. Therefore, any local organization interested in opening an Urgent Public Health Needs Site must apply directly to Health Canada.⁷

Hamilton has one Urgent Public Health Needs Site, currently operated by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) at Carol Anne's Place.

⁷ Health Canada (2022): Supervised consumption explained: types of sites and services. Retrieved January 25 2023 from: Supervised consumption explained: types of sites and services - Canada.ca

Supervised Consumption Services in Ontario

As noted above, there is currently two approved supervised consumption spaces in Hamilton. As the drug poisoning crisis continues to worsen, there is continued need for additional supervised consumption spaces within the community. The AIDS Network (TAN) is currently applying for a second CTS site in Hamilton at 746 Barton St. East. In 2021 the Board of Health, via a motion, supported The AIDS Network to open a CTS site in Ward 3.⁸ The Ministry of Health has advised that the strongest form of support a CTS applicant can provide is a local municipal council resolution that is address specific. Additional letters of support from individual councillors are also welcomed. Given the existing motion is not address specific, the Ministry has encouraged The AIDS Network as the applicant to obtain municipal council support with the full address of the proposed CTS. As part of this CTS application, The AIDS Network will be required to submit an application to Health Canada to receive CTS approval from the province, and the Ministry has outlined other outstanding requirements to the applicant for their application. When considering providing municipal support for a CTS site, council should consider the five requirements for a CTS application as part of their decision-making.

In closing, supervised consumption is a key intervention to provide safe options for those who use substances. As overdoses and deaths continue to increase in Hamilton, additional supervised consumption spaces, Consumption and Treatment Service Sites and Urgent Public Health Needs Sites are needed to provide a safe place to consume substances. However, supervised consumption is just one intervention to reduce harms for people who use drugs. A comprehensive approach supported by funding and action at all levels of government is required to address the significant harms associated with the drug poisoning crisis.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not Applicable.

⁸ City of Hamilton (2021). Board of Health Minutes 21-010. Retrieved January 27 2023 from: <https://pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=299170>