



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Epidemiology and Wellness Division

TO:	Mayor and Members Public Health Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 16, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Supervised Consumption Site Evaluation Framework (BOH23025) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Supervised Consumption Site Evaluation Framework, attached as Appendix “A” to Public Health Committee Report BOH23025, be approved; and,
- (b) That the Public Health Services budgeted complement be increased by 1.0 FTE in order to hire a Program Evaluation Coordinator at anticipated annualized cost of \$127,630 to be referred to the 2024 Tax Operating Budget for Council approval.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hamilton continues to experience a significant public health burden related to an increasingly toxic and unpredictable drug supply. As outlined in the Hamilton Opioid Action Plan (Public Health Committee Report BOH23021), continued local coordination of interventions aimed to reduce the harms and increase access to treatment are needed in the community. One evidence-based intervention is the provision of supervised consumption sites which operate to allow individuals to use substances in the presence of trained staff. Hamilton currently has two operating sites; however, the 2023 Opioid Action Plan has prioritized increasing the availability of these services in Hamilton. To understand the local impact, Council directed Public Health Services in February 2023 to develop an evaluative framework to demonstrate the community impact of supervised consumption sites.

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.

After a review of surrounding municipal evaluations and other projects completed across Canada, an evaluative framework has been developed for local consideration. The proposed framework would evaluate site usage, community safety, community health and well-being and economic impact through qualitative and quantitative site data and ongoing engagement with community members, persons who use substances, and site operators.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Recommendation (b) to Report BOH23025 is requesting the approval of a 1.0 FTE Program Evaluation Co-ordinator to support the operationalization and execution of the evaluative framework, at an anticipated annualized cost of \$127,630, to be referred for consideration in the 2024 Tax Operation Budget.

Staffing: Recommendation (b) to Report BOH23025 is requesting the Public Health Services budgeted complement be increased by 1.0 FTE Program Evaluation Co-ordinator to support the operationalization of the evaluative framework and support the evaluation of the Hamilton Opioid Action Plan to be referred to the 2024 Tax Operation Budget for Council approval.

Legal: Not Applicable.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Previous reports related to supervised consumption sites include:

- BOH217004(a) – December 2017
Hamilton Supervised Injection Site Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study;
- BOH19017 – March 18, 2019
Consumption and Treatment Services in Hamilton;
- BOH23007 – February 13, 2023
Consumption and Treatment Services Site Application; and,
- BOH23021 – June 12, 2023
Hamilton Opioid Action Plan

At its meeting on February 22, 2023 Council provided Public Health Services with the following direction:

“(b)(iii) That staff be directed to provide an evaluative framework with open data that demonstrates the community impact of Consumption and Treatment Services operations in Hamilton and make it publicly accessible on the City’s website.”

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Development of a supervised consumption site evaluation framework aligns with the Substance Use and Injury Prevention standard as outlined in the Ontario Public Health Standards. The standard outlines that Public Health Units are required to collaborate with local agencies and assess programs and services in order to build upon community assets. Of note, Public Health Services does not currently operate any supervised consumption sites and evaluation of these services in the community would require additional resource support.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Current site operators of supervised consumption sites were consulted during the development of the evaluative framework.

Finance and Administration provided consultation on the staffing costs and budgetary recommendations, and supports the proposed recommendations.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Responding to the ongoing drug toxicity crisis requires several coordinated interventions that are aimed at prevention, social justice, harm reduction and treatment. One evidence-based intervention is supervised consumption sites where individuals can use substances in the presence of trained staff. Supervised consumption sites also provide access to sterile drug-use equipment and facilitate access to healthcare and social services. Supervised consumption sites require an exemption from the federal *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* to permit the use of illegal substances.

To develop the evaluative framework a review of the local municipalities was completed and found that three local public health units in Ontario have conducted evaluations of supervised consumption sites including, Region of Waterloo Public Health & Emergency

Services,¹ Middlesex-London Health Unit,² and Ottawa Public Health.³ In addition to local site evaluations, some health units also report supervised consumption site data via a public facing dashboard. These health units include Ottawa Public Health, Region of Waterloo, and Toronto Public Health. Locally, Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre currently posts Consumption and Treatment Services Fact Sheets on their website, which communicates select Consumption and Treatment Services metrics such as visits and demographic data.

Elsewhere across Canada, evaluations have been done and published in both British Columbia^{4,5} and Alberta,^{6,7} although in the case of the Alberta Health evaluation, criticism has been raised with respect to methodology and subsequent conclusions.⁸

¹ Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services & Sanguen. (2021, July). Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) Review (January to December 2020). Retrieved from <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/regional-government/resources/Reports-Plans--Data/Public-Health-and-Emergency-Services/CTS-2020-Review-Infographic.PDF>

² Middlesex-London Health Unit. (2019, March). Comprehensive Report Findings from an Evaluation of London's Temporary Overdose Prevention Site. Retrieved from <https://www.healthunit.com/uploads/saving-lives-changing-lives-evaluation-of-londons-temporary-overdose-prevention-site-comprehensive-report.pdf>

³ Ottawa Public Health. (2018, February 5). Interim OPH SIS Evaluation Results. Retrieved from <https://pub-ottawa.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=40073>

⁴ Island Health. (2018, August). Evaluation of Overdose Prevention Sites: Campbell River, Courtenay, Cowichan Valley, and Port Alberni - Final Report. Retrieved from <https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/2018-10/evaluation-OPS-report.pdf>

⁵ Mema, S. C., Frosst, G., Bridgeman, J., Drake, H., Dolman, C., Lappalainen, L., & Corneil, T. (2019, January 10). Mobile supervised consumption services in Rural British Columbia: lessons learned. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 16(4). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-018-0273-3>

⁶ Alberta Community Council on HIV. (2019, August). A Community Based Report on Alberta's Supervised Consumption Service Effectiveness. Retrieved from <https://crismprairies.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/A-Community-Based-Report-on-Alberta%E2%80%99s-SCS-Effectiveness-2019-08-16.pdf>

⁷ Alberta Health, Government of Alberta. (2020, March). Impact: A socio-economic review of supervised consumption sites in Alberta. Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/dfd35cf7-9955-4d6b-a9c6-60d353ea87c3/resource/11815009-5243-4fe4-8884-11ffa1123631/download/health-socio-economic-review-supervised-consumption-sites.pdf>

⁸ 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*, 18(4). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-020-00456-2>

Public Health Services is proposing a framework to demonstrate the impact of sites in reducing the harms associated with the increasingly toxic drug supply in the community. The framework is built upon the community consultations completed during the 2017 Hamilton Supervised Injection Site: Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study.⁹ As part of this study, the consultations focused on the perceived benefits and consequences of establishing a supervised consumption site in Hamilton. The four overarching domains proposed for the evaluation have been based upon the synthesized findings and are:

1. Site Usage;
2. Community Safety;
3. Community Health & Well-Being; and,
4. Economic Impact.

The proposed framework would incorporate data from all operating sites providing supervised consumption services. Currently this includes the Consumption and Treatment Services site at the Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre and the Urgent Public Health Needs site at YWCA Hamilton's Carole Anne's Place. This framework would also support the evaluation of the proposed Urgent Public Health need site housed at a men's shelter site as outlined in the Hamilton Opioid Action Plan (Public Health Committee Report BOH23021). Due to the few supervised consumption sites currently in existence, aggregating the data will evaluate the intervention and not compare or evaluate individual sites.

Each of the domains above are associated with indicators and metrics to capture community impact. An overview of these indicators is available in Appendix "A" to Public Health Committee Report BOH23025. The indicators are primarily quantitative and have been mapped to existing metrics that sites are already collecting and/or required to report monthly to the Ministry of Health. The economic impact would be evaluated using previously published methodology used in Calgary.¹⁰ Understanding the community impact would be done through engagement with community partners, individuals who use supervised consumption sites, and any working groups associated with supervised consumption sites via a survey and site operators (e.g. impact on community outside of operational hours).

⁹ City of Hamilton Public Health Services & McMaster University. (2017, December). Hamilton Supervised Injection Site: Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study. Retrieved from <https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2023-03/hamilton-supervised-injection-site-study.pdf>

¹⁰ Khair, S., Eastwood, C. A., Lu, M., & Jackson, J. (2022). Supervised consumption site enables cost savings by avoiding emergency services: a cost analysis study. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 19(32). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-022-00609-5>

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The findings of the evaluation will be published on the Hamilton Opioid Information System and are anticipated to be updated on a routine basis (e.g. quarterly). The community survey is proposed to be completed on a bi-annual basis.

While the above outlines the high-level direction of the framework, operational details will be determined through engagement with people who use substances, the supervised consumption site operators, community members and any emerging best practices or guidelines from other local jurisdictions engaged in this work. An ongoing collaborative relationship is important to also proactively minimize any risk of stigma associated with substance use through the introduction of an evaluative framework. As such, the indicators and metrics are subject to change depending on feasibility, utility, or other identified community needs. Additionally, data sharing agreements will need to be entered into with the supervised consumption site operators which will require coordination with the City's Legal Services Division.

To operationalize the framework and support this new portfolio of work, a 1.0 FTE Program Evaluation Co-ordinator position is recommended. This position will support operationalizing the framework (e.g. survey design, validation of metrics, etc.), engagement with community partners and site operators, production of reports and recommendations, and any knowledge translation products and support the evaluation of the Hamilton Opioid Action plan. If the recommendations are approved as part of the 2024 Tax Operation budget, the evaluative framework will be operationalized in Q4 2024.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Should Council determine that the work be initiated in 2023, Council could approve funding of \$26,767 in 2023 and an increase to the Public Health Services budgeted complement in 2023 by 1.0 FTE to hire a Program Evaluation Co-ordinator, to be funded first from any Public Health surplus, then from any Healthy and Safe Communities departmental surplus, then from any Corporate surplus or any other source as deemed appropriate by General Manager of Corporate Services. The anticipated annualized cost of \$127,630 would be included in the 2024 Tax Operated Budget.

If the alternative is approved, the evaluative framework will be operationalized by Q2 2024.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report BOH23025 Supervised Consumption Site Evaluative Framework