

the VOICE for
registered nurses,
nurse practitioners
and nursing students
in Ontario

Harm reduction: Expanding beyond the decriminalization conversation

Health system transformation – Speaking up and speaking out
webinar series

Monday, Nov. 14, 2022

Land Acknowledgement

- RNAO is located on Huron Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the Credit, Treaty 13.
- Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, (agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations)
- This land is still the home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples from across Turtle Island.
- Land acknowledgments are an act of reconciliation and we must all do our part.



<https://native-land.ca/>

**This session is
being recorded**

Today's Agenda

AGENDA	SPEAKERS
Welcome	Susan McNeill, associate director, RNAO
Introduction to today's session -recap of the last webinar -overview of RNAO's work on harm reduction	Sabrina Merali, manager, mental health and addiction program, RNAO Matthew Kellway, director, nursing and health policy, RNAO
Panel discussion Harm reduction: Expanding beyond the decriminalization conversation	Hayley Thompson – project manager, Toronto's Drug Checking Service, Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation Scott M Roose – harm reduction and anti stigma speaker and advocate Marysia (Mish) Waraksa – NP and clinical lead for the Parkdale Queen West Safer Opioids Supply Program, Toronto Dawit Belay – RN, SOS Program, Regent Park CHC Michael Roach – RN and regional lead for Addiction Services, Health Sciences North, Sudbury
Questions and Answers	Sabrina Merali
Opportunities for taking action	Matthew Kellway
Closure	Dr. Doris Grinspun, RNAO CEO

LAST MONTH panel discussion: Decriminalization of simple drug possession

➤ Watch recording: [Health System Transformation — Speaking Up and Speaking Out | RNAO.ca](#)



Cori Chapman

Retired nurse,
mother,
grandmother and
great-grandmother



Kathy Moreland

Registered nurse,
Active member of
MOMS STOP THE
HARM



**Sandra Ka Hon
Chu**

Lawyer and co-
executive director of
the HIV Legal
Network



**Marysia (Mish)
Waraksa**

NP and clinical lead
for the Parkdale
Queen West Safer
Opioids Supply
Program



Émilie Frenette

Primary health care
nurse practitioner
and supervisor of
Toronto Public Health's
injectable opioid agonist
therapy program

Overview of RNAO's work on harm reduction


R
N
A
O

iaBPG
INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS & BEST PRACTICE
GUIDELINES
TRANSFORMING
NURSING THROUGH
KNOWLEDGE

Best Practice Guidelines

FEBRUARY 2018

Implementing Supervised Injection Services




RNAO Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers
autorisés de l'Ontario

iaBPG
INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS & BEST PRACTICE
GUIDELINES
TRANSFORMING
NURSING THROUGH
KNOWLEDGE

Best Practice Guidelines

FEBRUARY 2015

Engaging Clients Who Use Substances



RNAO Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers
autorisés de l'Ontario


iaBPG
INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS & BEST PRACTICE
GUIDELINES
TRANSFORMING
NURSING THROUGH
KNOWLEDGE

Best Practice Guidelines

DECEMBER 2017

Crisis Intervention for Adults Using a Trauma-Informed Approach: Initial Four Weeks of Management

Third Edition

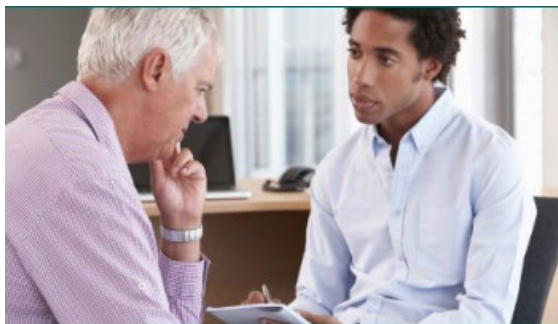


RNAO Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario
L'Association des infirmières et infirmiers
autorisés de l'Ontario

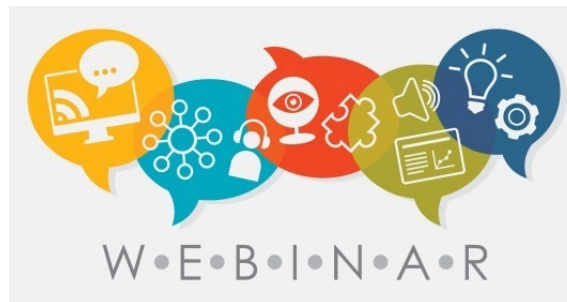
<https://rnao.ca/bpg>

RNAO Mental Health & Addiction Program

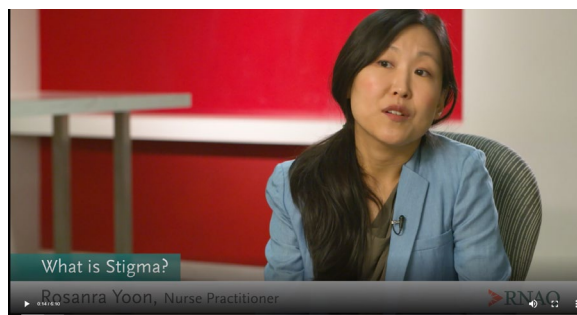
The goal of the Mental Health and Addiction program is to enhance **evidence-based care** and services related to **mental health and addiction** across all settings



E-Learning



Videos & Webinars



RNAO In-Focus: Mental Health & Addiction Best Practices Program

R
N
A
O



LOGIN

ABOUT MEMBERSHIP POLICY & POLITICAL ACTION BPG & BPSO MEDIA EVENTS IN FOCUS **JOIN/RENEW** MYRNAO



Photo credit: Nettie Wild

In Focus

RNAO Mental Health and Addiction Best Practices Program

On this page: [Our journey](#) | [Members leading change](#) | [Members mobilizing change](#) | [Partnerships and engagements](#) | [RNAO policy](#) | [Capacity building](#) | [Mental health and addiction in the media](#)

Our journey: Mental Health and Addiction Best Practices Program

Mental health and wellbeing are essential to everyday health. Pre-pandemic data suggested that each year, [one in five Canadians experienced a mental health concern](#), highlighting a crisis in Canada. Since the pandemic began, [50 per cent of Canadians have reported worsening mental health](#), with increases in stress levels, depression, anxiety and, higher rates of substance use and associated deaths related to opioid toxicity.

The need for increased mental health and addiction supports – in an already fragile health-care system in crisis – has never been clearer. Nurses are at the forefront of the system providing mental health supports to people in need of care and healing.

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario's (RNAO) Mental Health and Addiction Best Practices Program, established in 2006, drives change by providing leadership to enhance evidence-based care and services.

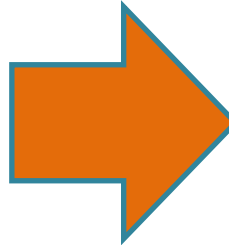
"As nurses, the single most important thing we can do to support mental health in the community is to nurture the seeds of resilience, connection and hope – both in our clients and in ourselves."

– Dr. Rosie Yoon, NP

Overview of RNAO's harm reduction policy work

R
N
A
O

QUEEN'S PARK ON THE ROAD
QPOR
2022
#QPOR



Fact Sheet
September 2022

Overdoses from toxic drug supply: A public health crisis

An escalating crisis

Cases of opioid-related morbidity and mortality, Ontario, 2006-2021

Year	Average number of deaths per day
2006	2.4
2007	3.5
2008	4.0
2009	4.2
2020	6.7
2021	7.9

(Preliminary data)

Origins of the opioid crisis

- Misleading marketing and over-prescribing
- Limited access to mental health services
- Poisoned illicit drug supply
- Social factors, such as experiences of grief and trauma
- Stigma around substance use

Intersection of COVID-19 and the opioid overdose crisis

Unintended consequences of the COVID-19 response measures on people who use drugs:

- social isolation
- limited access to direct services and supports
- increasingly toxic drug supply
- negative impact on mental health
- unsupported withdrawal
- greater risk of homelessness

Political Action Bulletin

Ontario's escalating overdose crisis

Between January 2016 and March 2022, more than 30,800 Canadians died from an opioid overdose. Ontario is not immune to this tragedy. In 2021, preliminary data from Public Health Ontario showed that 2,800 lives were lost - an average of eight people per day.

Evidence shows that the number of overdose deaths rose dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic due to several factors. Pandemic-related public health measures, such as social distancing and the closure of public spaces, had devastating consequences on people who use substances. Increased social isolation, no or limited access to direct services and supports, an increasingly toxic drug supply, negative impacts on mental health and unsupported withdrawal all played a role in escalating the crisis. Urgent evidence-based action with a harm reduction approach is required to stop preventable deaths.

RNAO recommends that the provincial government:

- support and fund overdose prevention and supervised consumption sites (SCS) in every community in need across the province
- amend the Ontario Drug Formulary to support an expansion of safer supply programs
- decriminalize simple drug possession by obtaining a province-wide exemption from the federal government to Section 56.1 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA)

Background

History of the crisis

The genesis of our current opioid crisis goes back three decades. The prescription of opioids such as codeine, fentanyl, morphine, oxycodone and hydromorphone increased significantly in the 1990s when drug companies started to develop and market new formulations of opioids for pain relief. A notable example, OxyContin, was introduced to the Canadian market in 1996 by Purdue Pharma. This was followed by an extended period of high rates of opioid prescribing.

By 2012, there was growing awareness of over-prescribing, as well as serious risks associated with opioid use, including physical dependence, substance use disorder and overdose. This led to efforts to decrease prescribing by changing drug formulations, developing guidelines for prescribing high-strength opioids and restricting access to opioids. An unintended consequence of these actions was an increase in street drug use.

Sept. 2022 | RNAO.ca

Action Alert: End the overdose crisis, premier

Action Alert

Join the **#DecriminalizeNow** campaign

RNAO's federal election platform

NURSES vote X'21



RNAO's provincial election platform 2022

Ontario's nursing crisis: Your health, your health system

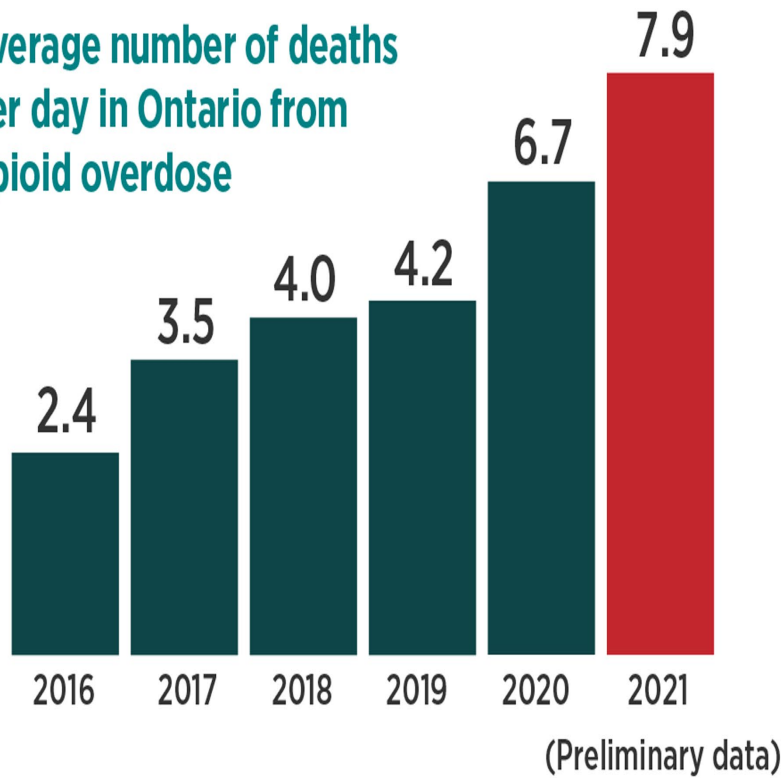
RNAO Meets with Minister Tibollo Oct 31, 2022



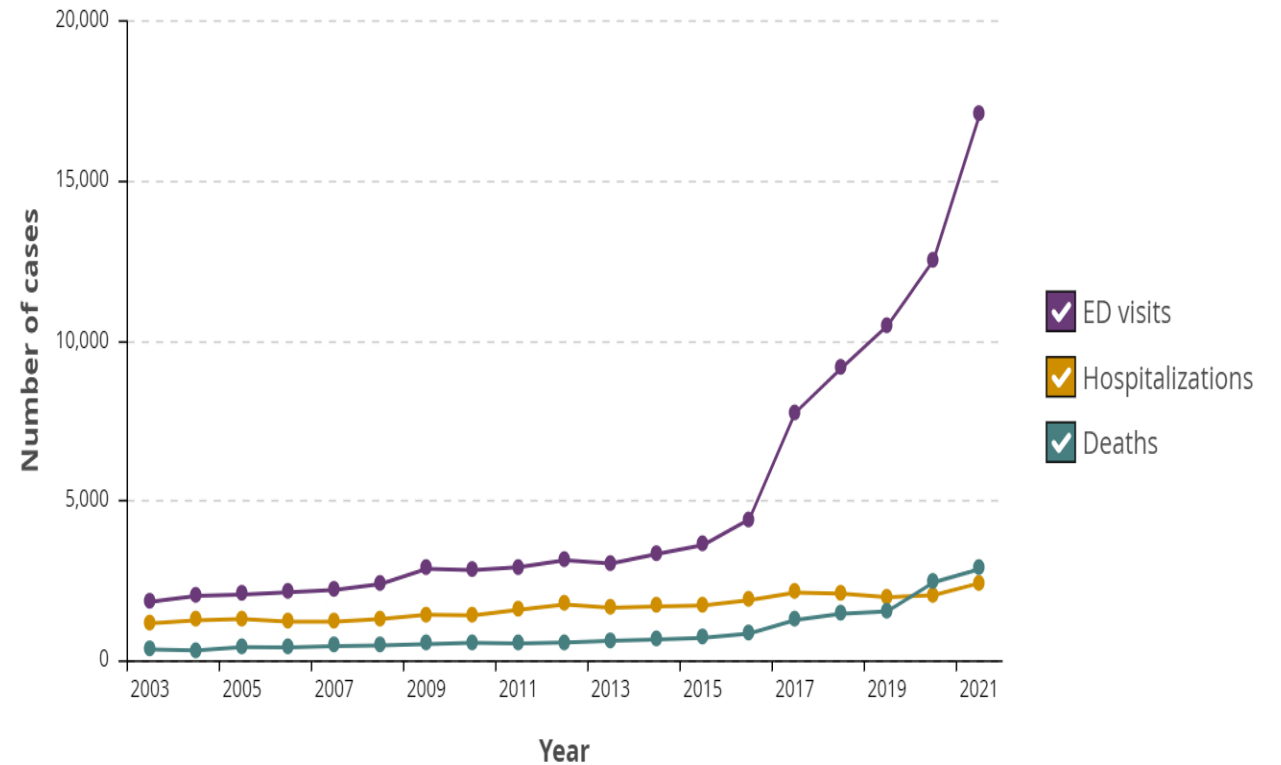
Opioid Crisis in Ontario

The following data is from Public Health Ontario

Average number of deaths per day in Ontario from opioid overdose



Cases of opioid-related morbidity and mortality, Ontario, 2003 - 2021



Today's panel



Hayley Thompson
project manager,
Toronto's Drug
Checking Service,
Centre on Drug Policy
Evaluation



Scott M Roose
Harm reduction
and anti stigma
speaker and
advocate



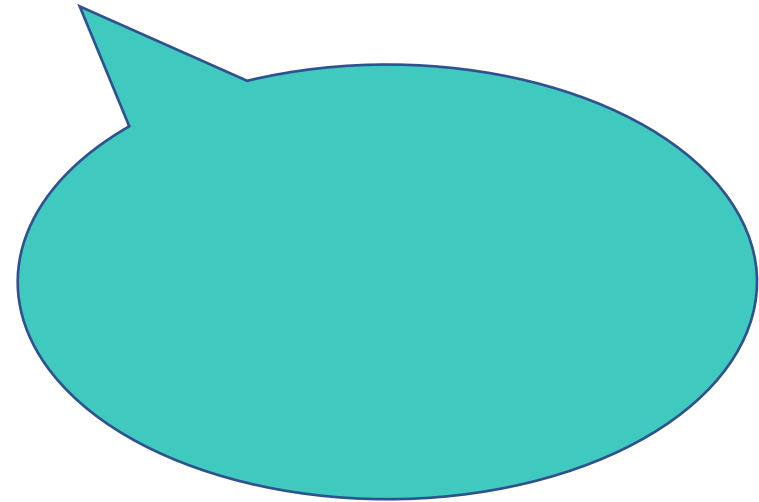
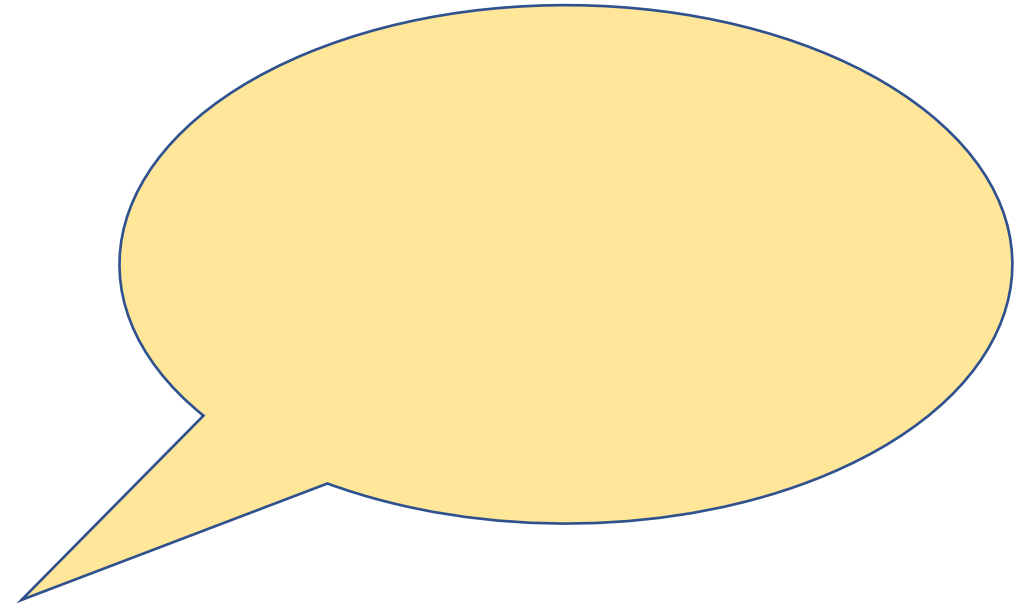
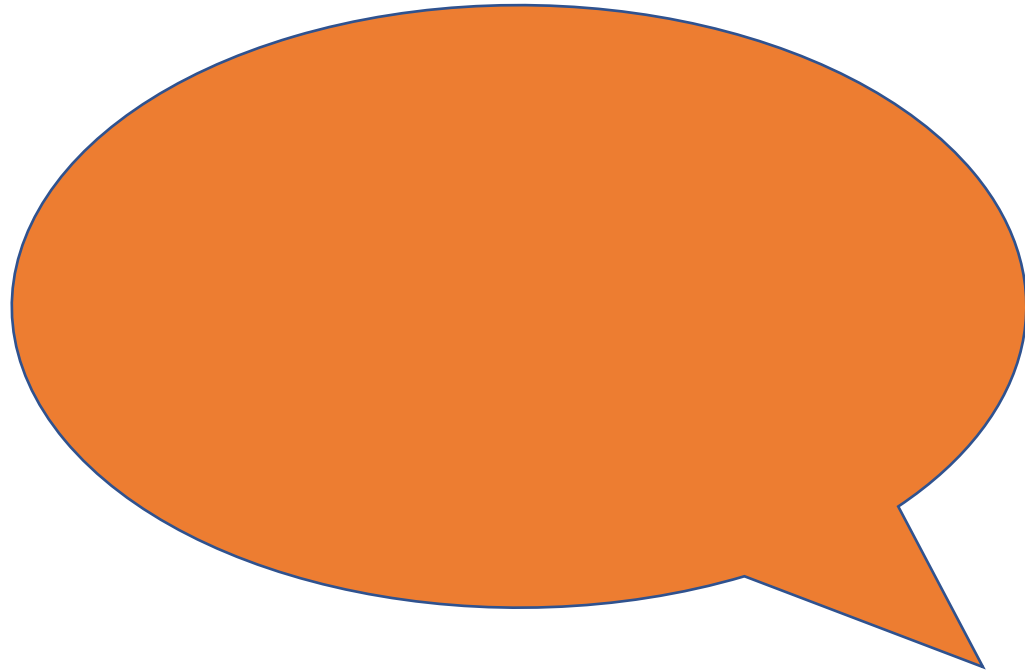
**Marysia (Mish)
Waraksa**
NP and clinical lead
for the Parkdale
Queen West Safer
Opioids Supply
Program



Dawit Belay
RN, SOS Program
Regent Park CHC



Michael Roach
RN and regional
lead for Addiction
Services, Health
Sciences North,
Sudbury



**DISCUSSION
Q&A**

Questions or suggestions

CONTACT: mha@RNAO.ca

Visit: www.RNAO.ca/mentalhealth

RNAO In Focus page: [RNAO Mental Health and Addiction Best Practices Program | RNAO.ca](http://www.RNAO.ca/mentalhealth/addiction)



Next webinar: Monday,
Dec. 12, 2022, 2 to 4 p.m.



RNAO WEBINAR SERIES

**Health System
Transformation -
Speaking Up and
Speaking Out**



JOIN **RNAO** NOW AND ENJOY
A WHOLE YEAR OF BENEFITS!
WITH **PLP** & TAXES INCLUDED FOR RNs & NPs:

- \$256 – Regular
- \$175 – ONA member
- \$87.83 – work less than 15 hours per week, retired or on parental leave
- \$102.94 NP new grad
- \$21.60 – undergraduate nursing student
- \$92.99 – Friend of RNAO (if other categories do not apply)

to be **informed**
to be **inspired**
to be **involved**
to be **guided**



VISIT **[JOIN.RNAO.CA](https://www.join.rnao.ca)** TODAY