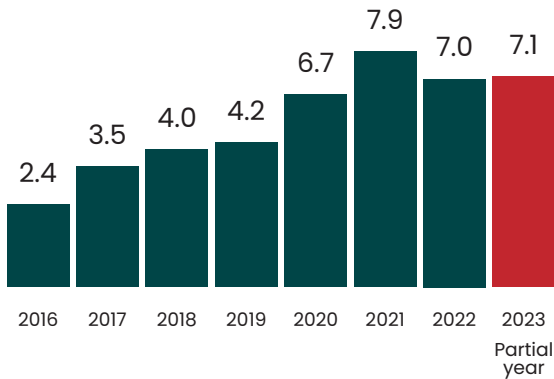


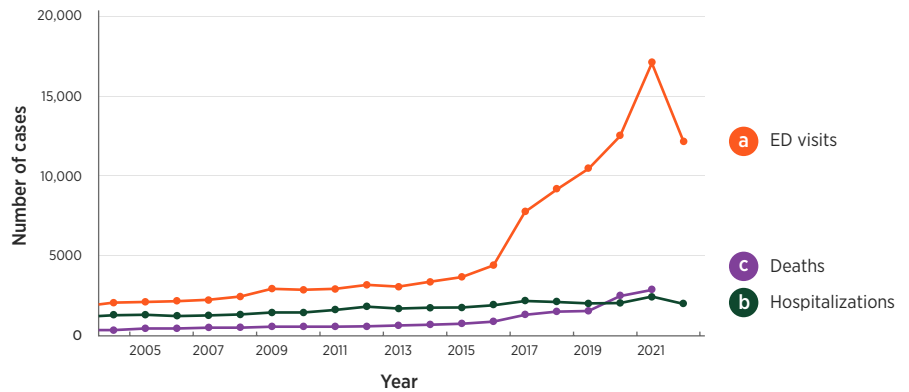
Overdoses from toxic drug supply: A public health crisis

An escalating crisis

Average number of deaths per day in Ontario from opioid overdose



Cases of opioid-related morbidity and mortality, Ontario, 2003-2022



ER visits for toxic drug overdoses and other complications remain 16 per cent higher than pre-pandemic levels.

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

Harm reduction in theory and practice

“Harm reduction” refers to programs, policies and practices that aim to minimize negative health, social and legal impacts associated with a behaviour such as drug use. It focuses on positive change and working with people without judgment, coercion, discrimination or requiring they stop using drugs as a precondition of support.

Supervised consumption services

Supervised consumption services (SCS) sites are places where people who use drugs can do so in monitored, hygienic environments to reduce overdose deaths and other harms from substance use. They also offer other health and social services.



Safe space for consumption



Education, counselling and peer support

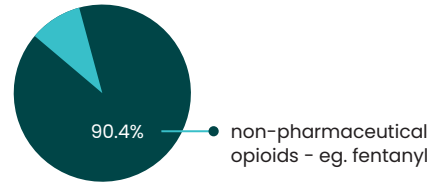


Access to care

Safer supply

Contents of street drugs are unknown to users. Safer supply programs provide access to pharmaceutical-grade drugs as a safer alternative to the poisoned illicit drug supply.

Cause of opioid toxicity deaths, 2021



Decriminalization

Decriminalization requires a federal exemption of Section 56.1 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA).

Did you know? British Columbia has received a province-wide exemption under the CDSA. Starting Jan. 31, 2023, under a three-year pilot program, individuals in British Columbia will be able to legally carry up to 2.5 grams of certain illicit drugs.

Where are we now?

- August 2017 • First safe injection site (SIS) opens in Ontario
- January 2018 • Ontario government creates simplified process to apply for Overdose Prevention Services (OPS) approval and funding
- October 2018 • Ontario government announces Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) will replace the existing SIS and OPS models, and promises 21 CTS sites
- May 2020 • British Columbia announces their plans to expand RN scope to allow them to prescribe safer alternatives for opioid use disorder
- August–September 2020 • Federal government increases funding for safer supply initiatives in Ontario
- November 2020 • Vancouver city council passes motion seeking decriminalization
- January 2021 • Montreal city council passes motion seeking decriminalization
- November 2021 • British Columbia applies for decriminalization with federal government
- June 2022 • At time of provincial election, there are 17 CTS sites in Ontario
- January 2023 • Three year pilot program providing exemption for simple drug possession in British Columbia begins