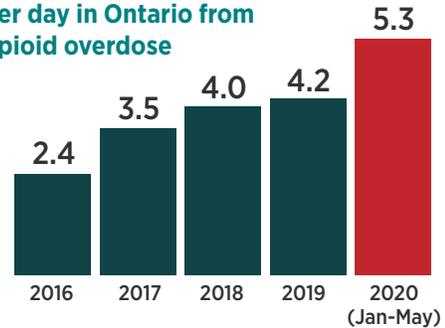


Accidental opioid overdoses: A public health crisis

On average
**5 Ontarians die each day
from opioid overdose**

Average number of deaths
per day in Ontario from
opioid overdose



Why is this happening?



Misleading
marketing
of opioids



Over-prescribing



Poisoned illicit
drug supply

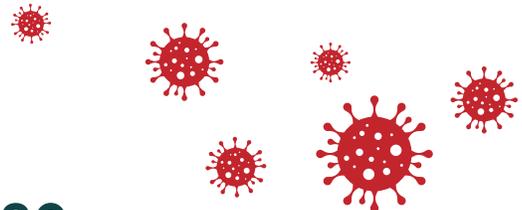


Social factors,
such as experiences
of grief and trauma



Stigma around
substance use

Opioid crisis & the COVID-19 pandemic: Dual public health emergencies



Ontarians dying each week from
suspected drug-related overdoses: **~44** 2019 vs. **50-80**
(during COVID-19)

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

How can we respond?

The crisis demands a practical approach, one that prioritizes keeping people alive.
Central to harm reduction, we must respect basic human dignity and the rights of people who use drugs.



What does harm reduction look like in practice?

Harm reduction can include a series of programs, services and practices that aim to reduce harms associated with substance use. **To prevent overdoses, this must start with supervised consumption and opioid poisoning intervention.** Other services can include:



Safe injection supplies



Naloxone training and distribution



Peer support and other services



Education and counselling



Referrals (primary health care, treatment and rehabilitation)

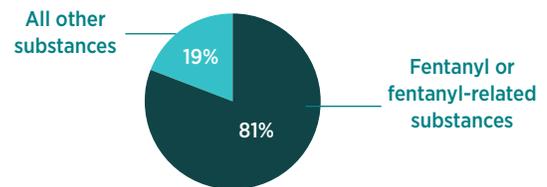


Nurses are well-positioned to advocate for people with lived experience to urge immediate action in response to the escalating opioid overdose crisis.

An extension of harm reduction through safer supply

- A public health approach that focuses on saving lives
- A poisoned drug supply is a major driver of the opioid crisis
- Provide access to pharmaceutical-grade drugs as a safer alternative to the poisoned illicit supply

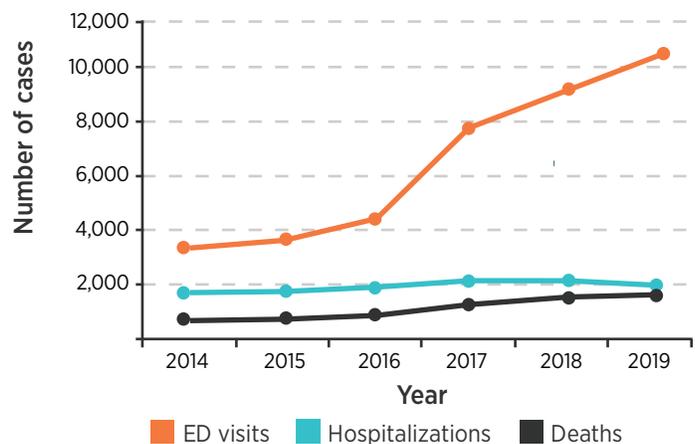
Accidental opioid-related deaths in Ontario from 2018-2019



Where are we now?

- August 2017** • First Supervised Injection Services (SIS) site 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.*
- August-September 2020** • The federal government increases funding for safer supply initiatives in Ontario.

Cases of opioid-related morbidity and mortality, Ontario, 2014-2019



*Challenges with current CTS model:



The government imposes a cap of 21 CTS sites.



The CTS application process is complicated and lengthy.