

Harm Reduction

- Harm reduction strategies focus on reducing the harmful consequences of drug use and other risky behaviours that effect a person's health.
- Harm reduction strategies recognize the difficulties associated with drug addiction and that avoiding drugs may not be realistic for everyone.
- These strategies are community-based, user-driven, non-judgmental, and address the way individuals may be isolated or marginalized.
- Needle syringe programs are helpful in modifying many risk related practices of injection drug use (for example reusing and sharing needles). These programs also reduce the spread of blood-borne illnesses such as HIV and hepatitis C.

Why Now?

- Hepatitis C has been identified as the most burdensome infectious disease in Ontario in terms of morbidity and mortality.
- Rates of hepatitis C are higher in H-N than the province and have been for over 5 years.
- Self-reported illicit drug use rates are higher in H-N when compared to the rest of Ontario.
- H-N had the highest percentage of individuals taking high strength prescription opioids when compared to all other municipalities in Ontario in 2015.
- Drug overdoses in 2016 in Norfolk quadrupled in number from January to December comparatively.

Successes to Date and Next Steps

- The HNNU's Harm Reduction Program plays a vital role in our community to help address these issues.
- By continuing to provide sterile drug using equipment, we help reduce the transmission of hepatitis C, a significant issue in the community.
- With the coming availability of Naloxone (the opioid overdose reversal medication) to our harm reduction program, we will be better equipped to ensure a safer, healthier community.
- We will continue to work closely with many community agencies, including Social Services, our local LHIN, OPP, Canadian Mental Health Association, Centre for Addictions and Mental Services, local methadone clinics, EMS, area hospitals, probation and parole, Holmes House, Sprucedale and the Grand Erie District School Board.
- We will continue to address this crisis that has already affected many people across Haldimand and Norfolk.

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Please see reverse for more detailed stats.

The Situation in HALDIMAND-NORFOLK

Local Illicit Drug Use Stats

Overall rates in H-N were higher in both males (**52.9** per 100 000) and females (**36.3** per 100 000) when compared to the province (**45.6** and **34.4** respectively).

Prescription Opioid Use

In 2015, H-N had the highest percentage of individuals taking high strength opioids when compared to all other municipalities in Ontario.

Sharing injection drug equipment is the most common risk factor for Hep C

Hepatitis C rates from 2011-2015:

- H-N rates are higher than the provincial rates in both males and females.
- Provincial rate hovered around **31** cases per 100 000 population.
- H-N rate averaged **40.9** cases per 100 000 population.

Hepatitis C - Males

- In H-N, **25-29 yr olds represent the highest number of cases** for males. The province has the highest cases in 50-54 yr olds.
- H-N has **double** the provincial rate for males age **25-29 (100.8 vs. 49.8** per 100 000 respectively).

Hepatitis C - Females

- **25-29 yr olds represent the highest number of cases** in females in both H-N and the province.
- H-N's rate for females is **almost double** the provincial rate (**75.6 vs 38.1** cases per 100 000 respectively).

Overdoses

Norfolk EMS overdose calls:

- 2014: **37** calls
- 2015: **59** calls
- 2016: **90** calls
- 2017: **23** calls (Jan-March)

Haldimand EMS overdose calls:

- 2015: **56** calls
- 2016: **46** calls
- 2017: **16** calls (Jan-May)

The distribution of safe injection supplies is associated with a significant decline in equipment sharing and/or re-using

For safe injection through HNHU needle exchange program

Number of needles/syringes distributed

- In 2014, **37 536** needles were distributed.
- In 2015, **64 070** needles were distributed.
- In 2016, over **108 000** needles were distributed.

4X Drug overdoses in Norfolk in 2016 **QUADRUPLED** in number from January to December comparatively.