

## Ottawa's Overdose Prevention and Response Strategy: 2024 Key Activities and 2025 Priorities

Ottawa's Overdose Prevention and Response Strategy has been established in collaboration with the Overdose Prevention and Response Task Force as well as other key partners. The task force is comprised of individuals and organizations representing various sectors, including people with lived and living experience and expertise, community health and social service providers, hospitals, pharmacies, emergency services (police, paramedics, and fire), mental health, addictions and substance use health service providers, the regional coroner's office, along with Ottawa Public Health.

This strategy is advanced through the implementation of initiatives, either by individual agencies or through collaborative efforts and codesign. The strategy is a comprehensive seven-pillar approach to address the multifaceted challenges posed by the toxic drug supply and the overdose crisis as well as the need to promote substance use health. A public health approach to substance use health is foundational to this strategy with the overarching need to ensure that people have access to safe, affordable and supportive housing. The pillars of the strategy are:

- **prevention across the lifespan** - Providing interventions that focus on early childhood interventions, fostering resiliency, and promoting mental health, and substance use health across the lifespan.
- **reducing stigma** - Reducing barriers and improving care by addressing stigma and discrimination.
- **advancing harm reduction measures** - Advancing existing and implementing new, innovative harm reduction strategies.
- **facilitating coordinated access to treatment and services** - Improving access and care across the mental health, addictions, substance use health and social services sectors, including culturally appropriate care.
- **ensuring community safety and wellbeing** - Furthering efforts to improve the safety and wellbeing of all people who live, work, play, and visit Ottawa.
- **maintaining strategies for cluster responses and alert systems** - Monitoring and ensuring timely reporting on emerging issues that are causing harm from the toxic drug supply, including supporting media reporting
- **enhancing data collection and surveillance efforts** - Improving the availability of evidence to inform system planning and actions by collecting, analyzing, and sharing data.

The interventions/activities listed under each pillar often influence the work and impacts of other pillars. This reflects the fact that actions undertaken to address the complexity of the overdose crisis and toxic drug supply are multi-faceted and interconnected and therefore impact multiple other areas under the strategy.

This 2024 Key Activities Report aims to showcase, high-level, the collective actions undertaken as part of the strategy. For more details on specific activities, OPH encourages readers to contact the lead agencies directly.

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### Prevention Across the Lifespan Pillar

Interventions	Lead agencies	Outcomes and impacts
<b>Advance and promote infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) development.</b>	Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative	The early years are crucial for development. Investments in IECMH to prevent problems occurring later in life from mental health, addictions and substance use health issues.
<b>Provide screening, counselling, referral and early intervention of Perinatal Mood Disorders.</b>	Ottawa Public Health (OPH)	Reduce adverse childhood events (e.g., violence, abuse, neglect). Enhance resiliency.
<b>Launch free, 9-week group-based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) program for women who are expecting or have a child (birth or adoption) and who have been feeling one or more of the following: depressed, sad, anxious, worried, angry or overwhelmed.</b>	OPH	During a nine-week series, participants meet in a virtual group setting with a public health nurse and learn skills to help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety by changing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
<b>Provide accessible mental health and substance use health information, resources and expertise through the Parenting in Ottawa website and social media.</b>	OPH	Increase knowledge and understanding that helps parents with positive parenting strategies.
<b>Provide accessible mental health and wellbeing online modules and education series such as Mind Master's and Healthy Transitions programs for schools and educators.</b>	OPH	Increase positive coping strategies and resiliency among children and youth.
<b>Provide Party Safer training on safer use of many substances, including opioids, how to identify an overdose and access to naloxone kits.</b>	OPH	Organizers and volunteers at large events, festivals, secondary and post-secondary institutions are better able to identify risks from many substances and prevent & respond to overdoses.
<b>Provide capacity building training for not-for profit organizations, faith leadership, Ottawa's African, Caribbean, Black and racialized communities, including South Asian communities.</b>	OPH	Increase capacity of health and social service providers as well as community leaders to provide basic mental health, and substance use support as well as overdose prevention, crisis support and suicide prevention to newcomers and racialized communities.
<b>Provide mental health focused youth group presentations (English &amp; French) in Ottawa Schools and through the online portal for youth.</b>	Youthnet RéseauAdo (YNRA)	Reduce stigma, increase coping strategies, and encourage youth to reach out for help.
<b>Provide mental health, behavioural addictions, and substance use health presentations in Ottawa schools with youth.</b>	Rideauwood (EN), Le Cap (FR)	Increase student access to prevention, education, and treatment to address substance use, behavioral addictions or mental health issues in and out of school.

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<b>Support the delivery and funding of Project STEP to address substance use health and technology use in Ottawa schools.</b>	Ottawa Network for Education and OPH	Enhance the promotion of mental health and substance use health; improve social and physical environments that support health and well-being; and increase prevention across the health system. Increase participation in substance use prevention, education and treatment for young people (12 - 18) to reduce the health and social harms of substance use.
<b>Provide mental health and substance use health focused training and supports to Post-Secondary Institutions</b>	OPH	Increase access to knowledge building training and supports for post-secondary students during this critically transition period.
<b>Enhance positive coping strategies and improve mental health and substance use health literacy through the have THAT talk video series and guides.</b>	OPH	Increase knowledge and skills for people to improve their wellbeing through the evidence based video series, activity guides and resources.
<b>Convene the Overdose Prevention and Response Task Force to further advance Ottawa's Overdose Response Strategy.</b>	OPH along with over 40 partner agencies	Increase collaborative efforts to prevent and respond to overdoses.
<b>Advancement of the "Our Community, Our House, Working Together on Wellness" community mobilization project.</b>	OPH	Increase access to Mental Health, Addictions and Substance Use Health programming while prioritizing suicide prevention and overdose prevention trainings and offering pop-up hubs in marginalized and equity-denied communities.
<b>Monitoring and responding to opportunities to influence policies at all levels of government.</b>	OPH	Influence the advancement of healthy public policy.
<b>Respond to the changing needs of the youth in the community by adapting the Youth Connections Ottawa (YCO) peer to peer program based on focus groups with youth from the following equity deserving groups; rural, francophone, African, Caribbean, Black community members and youth from lower socioeconomic status.</b>	OPH	Increase knowledge of positive mental health and substance use health with youth, including positive coping skills and substance refusal skills through peer led initiatives.
<b>Increase capacity of primary care providers by providing training, both in person and through accredited webinar series.</b>	OPH	Increase knowledge and capacity on mental health, addictions and substance use health, as well as local supports and services. A key focus of this training includes overdose prevention and response.

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### Stigma Reduction Pillar

Interventions	Lead agencies	Outcomes and impacts
<b>Work alongside people with lived and living expertise on various projects and initiatives.</b>	CAPSA (formerly Community Addictions Peer Support Association) and Ottawa Public Health (OPH)	Recognize the importance of continually working alongside people with lived and living expertise (PWLLE) ensures that the expertise and knowledge of PWLLE are part of the identified needs and solutions.
<b>Review and update the spectrum of substance use health knowledge exchange products.</b>	CAPSA	Advance understanding of substance use health, the spectrum of substance use and further reduce stigma. Recognize, reflect, and acknowledge the evolution of language related to substance use health.
<b>Include acknowledgement of the impact of lives lost related to the overdose crisis and the toxic drug supply.</b>	OPH	Acknowledging the grief, trauma and impact of lives lost to this crisis helps to reduce the stigma loved ones experience that may prevent them from seeking help.
<b>Actively promote and embed the “Tips for talking about substance use” resource into knowledge exchange product through various channels.</b>	Families for Addiction Recovery and OPH	Supporting families and loved ones to have safe and more effective conversations about the use of substances.
<b>Promote the e-learning module, <i>Stigma: How you can impact change</i>, on Mental Health and Substance Use Health Stigma.</b>	OPH	Supporting the community to learn about stigma and how everyone can work together to support the community through the language that is chosen.
<b>Standardize the <i>Stigma: How you can impact change</i>, <i>Party Safer</i> and the <i>OD Prevention and Response</i> e-learning modules into staff training requirements.</b>	Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre (PQCHC) and OPH	Building PQCHC staff capacity who engage with community members within the PQCHC catchment area. Trainings result in increased knowledge about stigma and the impacts of language, types of drugs, drug intoxication and overdose prevention, naloxone, how to respond to an opioid overdose, and availability of local supports.
<b>Expand the Working on Wellness annual event to promote overall wellbeing and the connection between physical health, mental health and substance use health.</b>	CAPSA	Public is more informed about Ottawa's wellness community services including substance use health, mental health and physical health organizations.
<b>Leverage the success of the 2023 City Studio project to expand the reach of stigma and the spectrum of substance use to first year medical students.</b>	OPH and CAPSA	Medical students learn about substance use health and the stigma people face. This knowledge helps break down

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		barriers to treatment by addressing and reducing societal stigma.
<b>Embedding stigma, cultural consideration, and language training in frontline paramedic training curriculum.</b>	Ottawa Paramedic Service	Public and 9-1-1 patients feel more safe and comfortable seeking care for mental health, addictions and substance use health by reducing stigmatizing behaviours and language.
<b>Embedding dedicated paramedics who receive specialized training in complex mental health and substance use health considerations in marginalized neighbourhoods.</b>	Ottawa Paramedic Service	Improving access to paramedics and healthcare options for those who experience barriers and stigmatization when seeking care. Improving relationships and trust with a marginalized population.



### Harm Reduction Pillar

<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Lead agencies</b>	<b>Outcomes and impacts</b>
<b>Provide Consumption and Treatment services in collaboration with partners: 3 Consumption and Treatment Services and 1 Supervised Consumption Service (OPH) offering services and referrals to additional health and social services in Ottawa. 1 24-hour access point; partner sites actively working to expand hours of service to meet demand.</b>	Ottawa Inner City Health (OICH), Sandy Hill Community Health Centre (SHCHC), Somerset West (SWCHC), Ottawa Public Health (OPH)	Reduce deaths by reversing overdoses. Increased # of people connected to additional health and social services through the Supervised Consumption and Treatment Services.
<b>Coordinate and lead the Ontario Naloxone Program (ONP) for the City of Ottawa, which provides take-home naloxone access to eligible organizations and their clients. Expand partnership to include additional local health and social service agencies, hospital emergency departments, Ottawa Police and Ottawa Paramedic Services.</b>	OPH, over 28 community partners including hospitals and first responders	Overdoses from opioids are reversed and deaths are reduced.

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<p><b>Participate in the provincial Ontario Naloxone Pharmacy Program (ONPP), which provides take-home naloxone access to eligible clients.</b></p>	<p>Pharmacies throughout Ottawa</p>	<p>More individuals are equipped to save lives and reverse fatal overdoses including those at risk, their family, friends, and people who care for others.</p>
<p><b>Provide drug checking services through onsite community-based drug checking services and take-home drug testing kits.</b></p>	<p>Ottawa Inner City Health (OICH), Sandy Hill Centertown Health Centre (SHCHC), OPH, Somerset West Community Health Centre</p>	<p>Reduce overdoses from the local toxic unregulated supply.</p>
<p><b>Naloxone distribution and party safer messaging at events including local festivals</b></p>	<p>OPH</p>	<p>More individuals understand how to reduce harms when using substances at events, including how to respond in the event of an overdose.</p>
<p><b>Prescribed Alternatives ('Safer Supply') Pilot Program: ongoing service provision and evaluation of prescribed alternatives. End of pilot project transition and sustainability plan building on lessons learned from Substance Use and Addictions Program pilot evaluations.</b></p>	<p>Safer Supply Ottawa and the University of Ottawa</p>	<p>Decreased reported overdose events; increased engagement in other health care and social services such as housing.</p>
<p><b>Promote use of digital solutions for people using alone such as the National Overdose Response Service (NORS) (peer-based overdose prevention line).</b></p>	<p>OPH</p>	<p>Reduce overdose deaths for people using alone.</p>
<p><b>Provide evening outreach to isolated people that use drugs in the Centretown CHC, Carlington CHC, and Somerset West CHC (SWCHC) neighbourhoods. Provide extensive wrap-around support to service users, including access to primary care, mental health, housing, and harm reduction services.</b></p>	<p>SWCHC DOPE Team (peer support and overdose response)</p>	<p>Timely and effective support to individuals in distress. Reduced calls for service for police and paramedics. Increased safety for both service users and the broader community.</p>



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<b>Employ people with lived and living experience of substance use to provide outreach services and improve community connections.</b>	OICH, SHCHC, SWCHC, Drug Users Advocacy League (DUAL)	Increased reach to those segments of the substance using community who are most at risk of overdose and death and who face the most barriers in accessing mainstream health and social service through peer leaders.
<b>Promoting harm reduction behaviours and naloxone kit distribution and education in high opioid use neighbourhoods.</b>	Ottawa Paramedic Service	Increased awareness and comfort among population helping in substance use emergencies.
<b>Mid-development</b>		
<b>Explore feasibility to expand services to address overdose by inhalation with partner CTS and clients.</b>	OICH, OPH, SHCHC, SWCHC	Reduced deaths from the inhalation of substances.
<b>Collaborate to assess gaps and implement solutions to address gaps in service due to the SWCHC CTS closure.</b>	SWCHC, OICH, SHCHC, OPH	Meet needs of clients of the closed CTS service that are beyond that of the Homelessness Addiction and Recovery Treatment Hub.
<b>Provide proactive and responsive outreach service in the Somerset West and Centretown areas to people who use drugs as point of connection to health and social services, as well as offering a community resource for discarded harm reduction equipment</b>	SWCHC - Community Response Team	Increased safety and wellness for people who use drugs as well as broader community.



### Co-ordinated Access to Treatment and Services Pillar

<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Lead agencies</b>	<b>Outcomes and impacts</b>
<b>Maintain Prompt Care Clinic to provide rapid access to psychiatric consult services for people 18-65.</b>	The Royal Mental Health Centre in collaboration with the Ottawa Hospital	Timely access to specialized psychiatric care for adults ages 18-65 years who are experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate mental illness.
<b>Maintain and expand system navigation supports for adults through AccessMHA. People are paired with a mental health and addictions professional.</b>	The Royal, Mental Health and Addictions Partners for Regional Coordinated Access	AccessMHA makes it easier for people 16 and older to find mental health, addictions and/or substance use health support, services, and care through referral and ongoing support. People are

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		paired with a trained mental health and addictions professional to be connected to needed services from a network of partner organizations.
<b>Maintain system navigation supports for children, youth and families through 1Call1Click.ca.</b>	Kids Come First Health Team	1call1click.ca matches children, youth (from birth to age 21) and families with mental health, addictions and substance use health care service and assist in making an appointment. Coordinated care for children and youth with complex mental health and addiction needs who require services from numerous providers.
<b>Maintain brief intervention counselling online and phone platform, Counselling Connect.</b>	Network of counselling service providers with strategic oversight provided by the Ottawa Health Team.	Faster access to no cost counselling and support groups for children, youth and adults.
<b>Deliver the Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) clinic services, including the digital front door, to help address the growing need for substance use treatment.</b>	The Royal Mental Healthcare Centre	Reduce opioid- and alcohol-related emergency department visits, related emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths. Helps to address the growing need for substance use treatment.
<b>Maintain the Paramedic Mental Wellbeing Response team.</b>	Ottawa Paramedic Services and The Ottawa Hospital	9-1-1 callers experiencing a mental health issue receive more timely medical assessment, referral, care plan and follow-up.
<b>Expansion of the Mental Wellbeing Response team to include access to Rapid Access Addiction Medicine.</b>	Paramedic Services, The Ottawa Hospital and The Royal	Improve access to low barrier treatment services and reduced opioid-related emergency department visits, related emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths.
<b>Launch of the dedicated ByWard Market advanced care paramedic team.</b>	Ottawa Paramedic Services	Build relationships in the local community to be able to connect and assess and respond to situations promptly in an area with high need and high volume of paramedic calls.
<b>Advance the City of Ottawa's Community and Social Services Department 10 Year Housing and Homeless Plan 2020-2030.</b>	City of Ottawa	Increase access to supportive housing to minimize harms from substance use in our communities and better support people experiencing challenges from substance use.



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<p><b>Advance strategic action plan that articulates a comprehensive approach to address the immediate, short-term and long-term needs of unsheltered residents. Includes developing accessible &amp; available services to support mental health and substance use health needs in collaboration with partners.</b></p>	<p>City of Ottawa's Unsheltered Task Force</p>	<p>Decrease individual and societal harmful impacts experienced by people experiencing homelessness and people unstably housed.</p>
<p><b>Ask Masi: This project, titled "Ask Masi", trains frontline Primary Perinatal Care Providers (PPCP) with existing prescribing authorities how to screen for perinatal mental illnesses and treat low-level anxiety or depression. Provides real-time peer supervision by phone or e-consult to assist PPCPs with practical feedback on more complex cases and community resources. Offers one-time virtual perinatal psychiatry consultation within one week for the most complex cases to assist PPCP with diagnostic clarification.</b></p>	<p>The Ottawa Hospital (TOH), Ottawa Birth and Wellness Centre (OBWC), Champlain Maternal Newborn Regional Program (CMNRP)</p>	<p>Improve access to timely perinatal mental healthcare in the Ottawa region by supporting primary perinatal care providers with prescribing authority such as nurse practitioners, family physicians, and obstetricians to independently care for their patients' mild to moderate perinatal mental illnesses (PMIs) closer to home, in community.</p>
<p><b>Establish the Archipel Postpartum Wellness clinic.</b></p>	<p>Archipel Ontario Health Team, the Montfort Hospital, and OPH</p>	<p>Timely postpartum mental health support to birthing individuals without a primary care provider.</p>
<p><b>Established training on co-leading and development with people with lived and living experience (PWLLE) for health care providers including Ontario Health Teams.</b></p>	<p>CAPSA</p>	<p>Advance efforts to learn from PWLLE as co-leaders, experts and developers in system planning.</p>
<p><b>Promote knowledge exchange resource of Black MHASUH Service providers in Ottawa.</b></p>	<p>Somerset West Community Health Centre, OPH</p>	<p>Improve information for people in Ottawa's Black community on where to find culturally appropriate service providers.</p>
<p><b>Mid-development interventions</b></p>		
<p><b>Submitted a transition plan to the Ministry of Health to establish a Homelessness, Addiction and Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub</b></p>	<p>SWCHC, Ottawa Health Team-Équipe Santé Ottawa, Ottawa Community Housing (OCH), Ottawa Salus Corporation and Ottawa Inner City Health, the City of Ottawa and others.</p>	<p>Providing essential support to serve Ottawa residents in the downtown core facing homelessness, substance use challenges, and seeking a wholistic approach to substance use treatment. The hub will offer a full spectrum of services—including primary care, mental health and substance use supports, along with a direct pathway to supportive housing.</p>

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<p><b>Submitted the West Ottawa HART hub (WOHH) application on behalf of 25 collaborating partners.</b></p>	<p>PQCHC, Ottawa West 4 Rivers OHT MHASUH Action Team and others.</p>	<p>The vision for the WOHH is to provide integrated supports to people experiencing complex health and social issues related to addictions and substance use. The WOHH will also offer early interventions and critical supports that will prevent individuals from slipping into more severe crises, while addressing the unique needs of those facing housing instability and related challenges.</p>
<p><b>Collaborative application to the Emergency Treatment Fund 2024 with a proposal to address urgent needs relating to the overdose crisis and toxic drug supply. The proposal focuses on outreach and connections to safe spaces.</b></p>	<p>City of Ottawa, 9 partners</p>	<p>Enhanced outreach in communities hardest hit by the toxic drug crisis will build strong relationships, provide overdose prevention and ensure connections to safe spaces that will provide basic necessities as well as connections to health and social services. This will also include connections to recovery-oriented care when people are ready.</p>
<p><b>Proposal submitted and accepted by Ontario Health for the Ottawa Hospital to be a preliminary site for the new Substance Use Disorder Integrated Care Pathway.</b></p>	<p>The Ottawa Hospital and several community partners (OICH, OPH, The Royal RAAM clinics, SWCHC, SHCHC, CAPSA, Psychiatric Survivors of Ottawa, Montfort Renaissance, Hawksbury and District General Hospital, McCain Manor, Cornwall Community Hospital, and AccessMHA.)</p>	<p>Improved substance use health experience in the emergency department with established pathways to services in the community.</p>
<p><b>Proposal completed for the development of a MHASUH Urgent Care centre.</b></p>	<p>Ottawa West 4 Rivers OHT MHASUH Action Team</p>	<p>Improved access to receiving timely urgent healthcare.</p>
<p><b>Healthy@Home: Collaboration of over 20 community partners to submit an application to Ontario Health to provide place-based health and social services to clients identified at risk for eviction in 15 high risk OCH buildings.</b></p>	<p>Ottawa Public Health Community Social Services Department- City of Ottawa Salus South East Ottawa Community Health Centre</p>	<p>This project has been the care model that has been used to showcase the possibility of integrated, place-based health and housing supports that promote housing stability. This proposal has been submitted and reviewed by various levels of government in order to further</p>

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	Ottawa Community Housing	socialize this concept of preventative and collaborative care across the health and housing sectors.
<b>Submitted a transition plan to the Ministry of Health to establish a Homelessness, Addiction and Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub</b>	SWCHC, Ottawa Health Team-Équipe Santé Ottawa, Ottawa Community Housing (OCH), Ottawa Salus Corporation and Ottawa Inner City Health, the City of Ottawa and others.	Providing essential support to serve Ottawa residents in the downtown core facing homelessness, substance use challenges, and seeking a wholistic approach to substance use treatment. The hub will offer a full spectrum of services—including primary care, mental health and substance use supports, along with a direct pathway to supportive housing.



### Community Safety and Wellbeing Pillar

Interventions	Lead agencies	Outcomes and impacts
<b>Implementation of the Ottawa Downtown Integrated Community Situation Table (ODICST). A group of organizations with a network of resources to assess needs and deliver a wide array of services from legal support, street outreach, housing, medical treatment, substance use treatment, emergency shelters, safer supply and targeted engagement and diversion.</b>	Sandy Hill Community Health Centre (SHCHC) and The Salvation Army Outreach (co-chairs) and Ottawa Police Service (OPS)	People identified by the ODICST are assessed and connected to needed supports. Community needs are assessed with partner agencies.
<b>Implementation of the Community Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) Strategy in the ByWard Market neighbourhood and Rideau Street area. This is a multi-partner collaboration to improve community safety and well-being in the ByWard Market. The collaboration includes multiple frontline service members that meet regularly.</b>	OPS, Ottawa Paramedic Service, Ottawa Public Health, OC Transpo, By-Law, Public Works, CSSD	Enhance public safety and community engagement in Ottawa's downtown core. Breaking down siloes in service delivery and strategies and increasing awareness on community safety concerns, while improving safety efforts to better care for members in the ByWard market. Increased communication across sectors that have led to new and collaborative efforts to address community wellness as a whole.

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<b>Opened the Neighbourhood Operation Centre (NOC) on Rideau St</b>	OPS	A public-facing storefront that is accessible to residents and those in need to connect them with either police or social services. The NOC is a shared space for all City partners to use and provides a one-stop shop for those seeking help, particularly those at high risk.
<b>Provide residents and business with support and information.</b>	City of Ottawa's Community Engagement Team	Better understanding of concerns and assist with coordination of services.
<b>Enhance the Community Needle Retrieval Programming in areas of identified need identified by community partners, local businesses, community members and health and social services partners. Launch an enhanced community needle reporting process. Launch community needle retrieval services map.</b>	Ottawa Public Health (OPH)	Increased needle drop box locations and needle hunter routes. Increased coordination and enhancement of city and community partner discarded needle retrieval services. Launched a publicly available dashboard to provide more transparency on community needle retrieval.
<b>Conduct routine inspections, complaint-based investigations, enforcement and public reporting for Ontario Ministry of Health funded Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) operating within the City of Ottawa.</b>	OPH	Results of the routine inspection are found at <a href="https://ottawapublichealth.ca">ottawapublichealth.ca</a> .
<b>Launch of the Alternative Neighbourhood Crisis Response (ANCHOR) Team on August 15 2024 within the Centretown and West Centretown catchments. ANCHOR is a confidential, culturally sensitive and equity centered service; operational 24h/365d/yr.</b>	Guiding Council, the Community Safety and Well-being Plan, Somerset West CHC, Centretown CHC, Community Navigation of Eastern Ontario, (211)	Crisis Response Workers (CRWs) support people experiencing mental health and/ or substance use-related crises; diverting these calls from traditional first responders, such as Police. Post-Crisis, service recipients can be connected with our Post-Crisis Follow Up Worker for a 48hr follow Up to address immediate issues/ concerns and connect service users to wrap around services and support.
<b>Maintain the new 'Block Leaders' program.</b>	Ottawa Inner City Health and the ByWard Market Balanced Task Force	Restore positive aspects of street culture with a priority on improving behavioral norms with people experiencing homelessness and those who use substances.
<b>Advocating for improved community connections and cohesiveness for people experiencing homelessness and all people that work, live and visit the ByWard Market. All people in the Byward Market have an urgent</b>	ByWard Market Balanced Task Force	Restore safe spaces where people can build community with an increased focus on animation, beautification and better lighting, and increased access to resources that meet basic needs.

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<b>need for community spaces where people can meet, congregate and connect.</b>		
<b>Establishment of the Sandy Hill Community Liaison Committee (SHCLC) in September 2023, which includes a broad and inclusive representation of business owners, direct and indirect service providers, housed residents and persons with lived/living experience with homelessness and/or addictions.</b>	Action Sandy Hill, SHCHC, City of Ottawa Community Engagement Team	This committee endeavors to work together to have unique perspectives heard as it relates to the localized impacts of rising unmet housing, social and healthcare needs and the toxic drug supply in the area and strives to work on short- and long-term localized solutions for a safe and thriving community for all. As activities start to take shape, regular briefings will be produced from this group and shared with federal, provincial, municipal and other stakeholders.



### Cluster and Response Strategy Pillar

Interventions	Lead agencies	Outcomes and impacts
<b>Continue to maintain an early warning and enhanced local surveillance system, which includes real-time qualitative and quantitative indicators and complementary information on local overdose risk (<a href="http://stopoverdoseottawa.ca">stopoverdoseottawa.ca</a>).</b>	Overdose Prevention and Response taskforce (ODPRTF) and Ottawa Public Health (OPH)	Communicate public messages to provide timely and lifesaving information on the toxic drug supply, knowing the signs of an overdose, carrying naloxone, and calling 9-1-1.
<b>Issue timely drug warnings and share information on local trends that impact health and wellbeing, including updating the alert system using Stop Overdose Ottawa (i.e., new substances in the toxic drug supply such as xylazine and benzodiazepines).</b>	ODPRTF, the Office of the Chief Coroner	Provide timely warnings of local trends and toxic substances in the drug supply allows for earlier action to prevent further harms and deaths.
<b>Maintain the “Ottawa Inter-agency Opioid Overdose Cluster Response Plan”.</b>	ODPRTF	Outlines the operational responses of all partner organizations to a cluster of opioid overdoses in the City.
<b>Leverage technology through the new public drug alert system</b>	OPH and the ODPRTF	Increase availability and reach of timely information related to the toxic drug supply.

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### Data and Surveillance Pillar

Interventions	Lead agencies	Outcomes and impacts
<b>Provide timely surveillance data and early indicators on the overdose crisis through the overdose overview tool on <a href="http://stopoverdoseottawa.ca">stopoverdoseottawa.ca</a>.</b>	Ottawa Public Health (OPH)	Monitor and act on the evolving overdose crisis to prevent and reduce overdoses.
<b>Provide data and evidence that supports actions.</b>	Ottawa Coroner's Office	Monitor trends in the toxic drug supply to ensure evidence informed interventions to reduce deaths. Examples include recommendations such as safer inhalation services and drug checking services.
<b>Implement recommendations from the Mental Health of Ottawa's Black Community Report for mental health supports in Ottawa's Black Community including Establishment of the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition and targeted interventions with Faith Leaders.</b>	OPH	Address the beliefs, experiences, gaps, and opportunities for mental health supports for people in Ottawa's Black Community.
<b>Conduct Population Health Surveys to assess aspects related to mental health, addictions and substance use health of people in Ottawa through collaborative efforts with the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System.</b>	OPH	Identify local MHASUH needs and issues with a focus on stigma and help seeking, to inform action. Increase surveillance efforts across the province.
<b>Advocate for the inclusion of an additional stigma focused question in the 2025 Ottawa results of the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health survey.</b>	OPH	Inform service providers about the areas of concern among youth in relation to MHASUH stigma, for system planning and service level interventions.
<b>Maintain and ensure knowledge mobilization of the Mental Health, Addictions and Substance Use Health Community Dashboard which provides a fulsome status of mental health, addictions and substance use health experiences in Ottawa.</b>	OPH, Overdose Prevention and Response Task Force, and other partners	Inform actions for system and service planning, identify needs and gaps as well as opportunities for research.
<b>Analyze and disseminate the 2023 Ottawa results of the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health survey.</b>	OPH	Inform service providers about the areas of concern among youth in relation to MHASUH, for system planning and service level interventions.
<b>Enhanced Surveillance due to service reductions at two of Ottawa's Consumption and Treatment</b>	OPH	This allowed for timely monitoring and reporting on the impacts of this service disruption. Additionally, qualitative feedback and



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<b>Service (CTS) sites. In addition to monitoring quantitative data on health harms, qualitative data on people's experiences during this time was also captured.</b>		recommendations from those impacted by these closures has informed future service planning.
<b>Supported health and social service partners through the development of knowledge mobilization resources that present local data and supported system and service level planning, including funding applications.</b>	OPH	Inform system and service planning and interventions as well as securing funding for different initiatives.
<b>Mid-development</b>		
<b>Further knowledge mobilization to service provider partners of the 2023 OSDUH Ottawa results.</b>	OPH	Improved understanding of the 2023 OSDUHS results by people who work with children and youth to influence action and decision making.

### Ottawa's Overdose Prevention and Response Strategy Priority Setting for 2025

Below are key examples of work that will be advanced throughout 2025 under the strategy to prevent harms and promote wellness.

<b>Key Priorities for 2025</b>	<b>Lead agencies</b>	<b>Pillar Alignment</b>	<b>Example of Activity(s)</b>
<b>Continue to build upon efforts to prevent overdoses and reduce harm that can be experienced from substance use.</b>	ODPRTF	Prevention across the lifespan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevention education at events and festivals, organizations and at schools</li> </ul>
<b>Advance efforts to promote the use of non-stigmatizing language, including person-first language.</b>	OPH, CAPSA, FAR	Reduce Stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Studio project</li> <li>Sharing the <i>Stigma: How you can impact change module</i></li> </ul>
<b>Collaborate to assess gaps and implement solutions to address gaps due to the SWCHC CTS closure.</b>	CTS partners ODPRTF	Harm Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor impacts of the closure of SWCHC CTS</li> <li>Provision of Consumption and Treatment Services and drug checking at remaining sites</li> <li>Advancement of Ontario Naloxone Program and Ontario Naloxone Pharmacy Program</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Ensure people experiencing homelessness and who are at a point of readiness for recovery have access and support.</b></p>	<p>SWCHC, OICH, Salus, OCH</p>	<p>Co-ordinated access to treatment and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the HART hubs</li> <li>• Community information sessions to discuss scope of HART hub and identify concerns, opportunities and potential gaps</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve pathways from acute care settings to community care for people experiencing challenges with their substance use.</b></p>	<p>TOH, Kids Come First</p>	<p>Co-ordinated access to treatment and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TOH as early adapter and phase 1 site for the Substance Use Disorder Integrated Care Pathway project from Ontario Health</li> <li>• KCF SUAP project: Hospital-Community Collaboration to Improve Trauma-Informed and Culturally Sensitive Alcohol Use Disorder Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Youth</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enhance and co-ordinate outreach efforts and access to safer spaces.</b></p>	<p>CSSD, OPH, Health and Social service provider partners</p>	<p>Community Safety and Wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advancing the Downtown Outreach Co-design project which aligns with other initiatives to improve outreach and connections to safer spaces</li> <li>• Collaboratively implement the Urgent Connections: Collaborative Outreach and Connections to Safer Spaces to Combat Ottawa's Toxic Drug Crisis Project</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advance efforts to ensure a coordinated emergency response to the toxic drug crisis.</b></p>	<p>ODPRTF</p>	<p>Cluster and Response</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the Cluster and Response Strategy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Continue surveillance and communication on the toxic drug crisis and other mental health, addictions and substance use health issues.</b></p>	<p>OPH</p>	<p>Data and Surveillance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative surveillance efforts related to the CST closure</li> <li>• Continued maintenance, monitoring and sharing of data through the OD reporting tool and the MHASUH community dashboard</li> </ul>