

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent

Community Human Services

Public Health Unit

Information Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Teresa Bendo, Director, Public Health
Date: November 19, 2019
Subject: Harm Reduction Program Update

This report is for the information of Council.

Background

Public health units are mandated by the Ontario Public Health Standards to “reduce the burden of preventable injuries and substance use, and more specifically, implement a harm reduction program”. Elements of CK Public Health’s program include:

1. A local overdose response plan- CK Public Health is responsible for conducting an assessment to understand opioid-related harms and needs in the local context, in order to inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of a local overdose response plan.
2. Naloxone distribution and training- The purpose of this program is to distribute naloxone kits to eligible community organizations to increase the dissemination of kits to their clients. CK Public Health works with agencies using a train-the-trainer model to administer naloxone, support organization policy development and promote naloxone availability in the community.
3. Opioid overdose early warning and surveillance- CK Public Health takes a leadership role in establishing systems to monitor and identify changes in local risk related to opioid poisonings. Surveillance and early warning systems include routine monitoring of key indicators and mechanisms to share timely information among health system and community partners, including people who use drugs, about changes in local risk level.
4. Needle-syringe program- In partnership with AIDS Committee of Windsor (ACW), CK Public Health provides needles, other drug using supplies and naloxone kits in order to minimize the spread of blood borne viruses (HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B,C),

and reduce other harms among people who use drugs and the broader population at risk.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council regarding CK Public Health's harm reduction program.

Comments

1. Local Overdose Response Plan

Throughout 2017-2018, CK Public Health conducted an assessment to understand the current situation around opioid-related harms. The assessment was informed by local and provincial surveillance data, research evidence and engagement with key local stakeholders.

The results of the situational assessment and feedback from community stakeholders reinforced the need for ongoing monitoring of opioid-related risk and coordinated capacity to respond.

The key themes from the assessment included:

- The largest barrier for people trying to access services in the community is stigma associated with substance use.
- There are significant ongoing challenges related crystal methamphetamine use.
- While polysubstance use is a reality and drug trends will continuously fluctuate, there are specific harms related to opioids, including the risk for poisoning and dependence that needs to be addressed as a community.
- Much of the previous community efforts have been focused on responding to needs downstream. More preventative interventions further upstream must take place to have a greater impact in the community.

CK Public Health is currently developing its organization's action plan to address these priorities. As indicated by the November 18, 2019 Information Report to Council regarding resourcing a municipally-led drug strategy, the funding of a Strategy Coordinator, accountable to municipal Council, is a key success factor to mobilize community partners for collective actions to reduce substance use-related harms in the community.

2. Naloxone Distribution

See web link <https://ckphu.com/health-topics/harm-reduction-supplies/naloxone-kits/>

People dying from opioid poisoning is an urgent public health crisis across Canada. Naloxone is a safe medication that reverses the effects of opioid overdose by blocking the effects of opioids in the brain.

Since March 2017 the CK Public Health, 177 King St E Chatham location has been a designated naloxone distribution site providing naloxone nasal spray kits to eligible community partners and people who use opioids, their families and friends, to increase the distribution of naloxone to those most at risk of opioid poisoning.

For information about responding to an overdose see <https://ckphu.com/health-topics/opioids-other-substances/>.

In 2018, a total of 184 kits were distributed, including 184 individuals trained. In 2019, a total of 427 kits have been distributed, and 317 individuals trained. CK Public Health has established partnerships with the following agencies: (1) Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Emergency Department, including the Wallaceburg site; (2) Community Health Centre, Chatham, and (3) Rapid Access to Addiction Medicine Clinic, Chatham.

While CK Public Health continues to increase the number of agency partnerships across Chatham-Kent participating in this program, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) organizations are not currently eligible to distribute naloxone kits as part of the Ontario Naloxone Program. Given the contact that first responders have with people at-risk of overdose, distribution of kits by EMS organizations would expand the reach of the naloxone program to those who need it most.

Community agencies interested in becoming part of this program can visit <https://www.chatham-kent.ca/health-social-services/public-health/naloxone-program-for-community-partners>.

For easier access, individuals may also obtain a naloxone kit from participating local pharmacies.

3. Early Warning Opioid Overdose Surveillance System

To support ongoing opioid overdose surveillance, a local information sharing process has been established among core stakeholders (CK Public Health, Police Services, Fire and Emergency Services, Emergency Medical Services, Community Health Centres, Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, Canadian Mental Health Association and Erie St Clair LHIN). Chatham-Kent Public Health receives automated notifications from Chatham-Kent's Emergency Medical Services regarding suspected opioid overdose-related calls, and weekly reports of opioid overdose-related emergency department visits from the Ministry of Health.

Information is communicated within the health unit among frontline harm reduction staff to stay aware of changing trends among the client population, and community naloxone distribution is continuously tracked. Furthermore, core stakeholders are encouraged to communicate pertinent information from their respective settings in order to maintain situational awareness among stakeholders. Local and provincial surveillance

information is summarized and emailed to stakeholders on a monthly basis or as required in special circumstances.

CK Public Health continues to monitor and support the implementation of an early warning system to ensure more timely identification, communication, and response to a “surge” in opioid poisonings or increased level of risk in the community. However, given the relatively low counts of local opioid overdose-related health care events, establishing an appropriate surveillance threshold upon which to initiate an emergency response can be challenging. Additionally, the ability for all partners to formally share real-time contextual, qualitative early warning information with those who need to know can be difficult as supportive data or other means to validate information is often lacking.

4. Needle-Syringe Program

See web link <https://ckphu.com/needle-syringe-program/>

Supplies Distribution Partnerships

Since 2008, CK Public Health has had a long-standing partnership with Aids Committee of Windsor (ACW) to administer a needle-syringe program throughout CK. Because the agencies do not have bricks and mortar facilities across CK, an innovative distribution model was developed that includes community partner depots coupled with a community outreach model.

ACW manages the bulk purchasing of supplies and distributes them to sites situated throughout Chatham-Kent: (1) Chatham-Kent Public Health, 177 King St E Chatham; (2) McIntyre IDA Pharmacy; (3) MacTavish Pharmacy; and (4) Shoppers Drug Mart, Wallaceburg where the partners distribute to the program’s clients. Since October 2018, the Needle Syringe Program has distributed approximately 29,114 kits, comprised of a combination of supplies.

In addition, ACW provides a program called *Yellow Umbrella*. It is a mobile outreach service focused on direct to service user delivery to improve accessibility. Since October 2018, *Yellow Umbrella* has distributed approximately 3729 kits. Through both the mobile outreach and the four satellite sites, the Needle-Syringe Program has made a combined approximate total of nearly 5000 transactions.

Province- Wide Data Collection

CK Public Health, along with ACW, has very recently partnered with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) for the purpose of collecting data from harm reduction service providers for the Ontario Harm Reduction Database. This web-based reporting system is used to record services provided and harm reduction equipment distributed to people who use drugs, and manage operational activities supporting harm

reduction service. It aims to improve harm reduction services by effectively monitoring and managing data as well as enhancing efficiencies in practices. The system will yield timely information to support program planning, implementation, and evaluation by public health units, harm reduction service providers and the Ministry of Health.

Safe Needle Disposal

See web link <https://ckphu.com/disposal-of-needles/>

Needles are used by a wide range of community members, including people with medical conditions, and people who use substances. When needles are discarded improperly in a public place, it is often a result of not having easy access to safe disposal.

With every transaction, the Needle- Syringe Program service providers provide brief education on safe needle disposal accompanied with a small needle disposal bin to help encourage safe needle disposal practices. Clients return these bins back to CK Public Health for disposal.

There are a number of places in the community where harm reduction supplies may be safely disposed of:

- CK Public Health, 177 King St E, Chatham. A yellow needle disposal bin is available 24-7.
- Needle- syringe program satellite offices and other harm reduction service providers
- Chatham-Kent pharmacies that participate in the Health Products Stewards Association return program
- Throughout the community you will find yellow sharps containers in public washrooms and in some businesses

While CK Public Health is working with partners to increase needle disposal options across Chatham-Kent, it continues to face challenges in terms of expanding the needle disposal kiosk initiative largely due to logistical and financial limitations, specifically establishing appropriate locations for outdoor needle disposal units and then determining a cost effective way to have those units monitored and emptied.

In other efforts to mitigate the impacts of improper sharps disposal and need for greater access to safer sharps disposal, CK Public Health continues to conduct quality improvement work around the municipal process for when calls are received regarding needles found out in the community.

Individuals are asked to contact Customer Service if needles are found on public property, in which the call can then be directed to the appropriate department. Should someone find a needle on private property, a Public Health nurse can provide

information to dispose of the needle safely? See Appendix A: “I Found a Needle: Now What?”

Despite the established calling directive, various municipal departments continue to receive calls regarding reports of found needles which makes it difficult to geographically track the calls and target interventions where truly needed.

CK Public Health continues to explore successful methods carried out by other municipalities and reviews, revises, and evaluates its harm reduction programs and services based on best practice recommendations.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

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Attachment: Appendix A, *I Found a Needle. Now What?*

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I FOUND A NEEDLE. NOW WHAT?

On Public Property:

(sidewalks, streets, parks, trails, alleys, facilities, etc.)



Call the Chatham-Kent Customer Service Department at 519-360-1998 to arrange for disposal.

On Private Property:

(home or business you own)



Follow the instructions below or call CK Public Health at 519-355-1071 for safe handling and disposal methods.

Steps for Safe Needle Disposal



Put on gloves (latex, garden or vinyl)

These will protect you from fluids, but not cuts or punctures

Pick up needle using tongs and place it (sharp end first) into a puncture proof, sealable container before closing tightly.



Clean the end of the tongs or tweezers with an alcohol swab before removing gloves.

Place gloves in trash and clean hands with warm water and soap.



Bring sealed containers to CK Public Health, Clinic Services - 177 King Street East, Chatham

DO NOT:

- Throw loose sharps in garbage
- Put sharps in recycling bin
- Flush sharps down toilet
- Throw sharps in bushes, parks or streets

Poked by a needle?

- Remain calm
- Allow the wound to bleed freely
- Wash the wound with soap and water
- Apply a clean bandage
- Go to your family doctor or emergency room right away