

Municipality Of Chatham-Kent
Community Human Services
Public Health Unit

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Emily Guerin, Public Health Educator
Date: January 19, 2021
Subject: Improvements for CK Public Health's Harm Reduction Program

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Mandatory training on safe sharps disposal practices be continued for all municipal staff, students, and volunteers to complete upon hire.
2. Enhanced safe sharps disposal training be implemented for municipal staff, students, and volunteers who are at higher risk of encountering sharps in their work.
3. Existing applicable policies be updated to include awareness related to mental health and substance use stigma and these updated policies be reviewed by all staff.
4. Enhanced training on mental health and substance use stigma be implemented for all municipal staff who interact with residents from vulnerable populations.
5. The amount of \$10,500 be approved to purchase and install seven 24-hour sharps disposal bins across Chatham-Kent, and that this purchase be funded from the approved 2020 Drug Strategy.
6. The amount of \$18,000 be approved to establish a contract with a biohazardous waste disposal company to regularly empty the bins, and that this purchase be funded from the approved 2020 Drug Strategy. Ongoing costs for this project will be referred to the 2022 budget process.
7. Administration be directed to explore options for a sharps disposal waste depot for the community.

Background

CK Public Health presented a report to Council on December 9, 2019, that provided an update on the elements of its harm reduction program.

On January 13, 2020, the following motion was approved by Council.

“Whereas needles are used by a wide range of community members, including people with medical conditions, and people who use substances;

And whereas various municipal departments continue to receive calls regarding reports of found needles, making it difficult to geographically track the calls and target interventions where truly needed;

And whereas CK Public Health and its partners continue to face challenges in terms of expanding the needle disposal kiosk initiative largely due to logistical and financial limitations;

And whereas when needles are discarded improperly in a public place, it is often a result of not having easy access to safe disposal;

And whereas businesses partnering with the program are facing challenges with a lack of adequate disposal supplies, putting a burden on their business/organization and their employees.

Therefore be it resolved that administration investigate and provide recommendations to Council to improve the Needle-Syringe Program in Chatham-Kent. The report will include an analysis and options for improving the following:

- 1. The distribution model that includes community partner depots and the community outreach program.**
- 2. The bulk purchase of supplies for the program.**
- 3. The ‘Yellow Umbrella’ mobile outreach service.**
- 4. The education messaging and materials for safe needle disposal.**
- 5. The number of locations where harm reduction supplies can be safely disposed of.**
- 6. Options for outdoor needle disposal kiosks.**
- 7. The municipal process for when calls are received regarding needles found out in the community.**

Furthermore, consultation with Aids Committee of Windsor, along with other partners across the Chatham-Kent community, including the Chatham-Kent Drug Awareness Council, be included in the making of the report.

And furthermore, staff be directed to explore alternative partnerships within Chatham-Kent to provide the program moving forward.

And furthermore, this report would be completed in collaboration with the future/pending Municipal Drug Strategy, which is being discussed during the 2020 budget sessions.

And furthermore, staff will report back to Council by June of 2020.”

The declaration of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent redeployment of public health staff, impacted CK Public Health's ability to submit the Council report in June 2020.

Comments

CK Public Health has prepared this report outlining the strengths and opportunities for improvement of its harm reduction program. The report relies on the opinions of key community partners who participated in interviews, focus groups, and surveys to inform the recommendations within this report. Direct service users of harm reduction programs and services were not consulted in preparing this report. CK Public Health recognizes this as a limitation and is prioritizing engagement of people who use substances as work moves forward.

Public health units are mandated to reduce the burden of preventable injuries and substance use, and implement or support the implementation of a harm reduction program. Elements of CK Public Health's Harm Reduction Program include:

1. Local opioid response plan – CK Public Health conducted an assessment to understand opioid and substance use-related harms and needs in CK. CK Public Health is currently developing its action plan to address the priorities identified in the assessment. However, as indicated in the [November 18, 2019 information report to Council](#), the funding of a Strategy Coordinator, accountable to the Municipal Council, is a key success factor to mobilize community partners for collective actions to reduce opioid and substance use-related harms in the community. This will be further explored in 2021 as staff work on the Community Drug Strategy.
2. Naloxone distribution and training – The purpose of the program is to distribute naloxone kits to eligible community organizations that can reach key populations to heighten the dissemination of kits. CK Public Health uses a train-the-trainer model to teach agencies how to administer naloxone, support organization policy development surrounding naloxone, and promote naloxone availability in the community.
3. Opioid poisoning early warning and surveillance – CK Public Health takes a leadership role in establishing systems to monitor and identify changes in local risk levels of opioid poisonings. Surveillance and early warning systems include the routine monitoring of key indicators and mechanisms to share timely information among health systems and community partners.

4. Needle syringe program (NSP) – In partnership with Pozitive Pathways Community Services (formerly AIDS Committee of Windsor (ACW)), CK Public Health provides needles, naloxone kits, and other drug use supplies to minimize the spread of blood borne viruses (HIV, Hepatitis B and C) and reduce other harms among people who use drugs and other at-risk populations.

The global COVID-19 pandemic is negatively impacting substance use across Canada. As its spread has been worsening, so has substance use. Research and community partner consultations indicate that the increasing amount of substances being used stems from feelings of stress, anxiety, and loneliness, and a change in one's routine. Clients accessing substance use services (for example, tobacco quit clinics, harm reduction supplies, and rehabilitation programs) are experiencing barriers due to interruption of services and reduced hours of operation. There are also challenges providing basic needs for those experiencing heightened vulnerability (due to exacerbated issues surrounding housing, income security, and transportation). As a result, these issues have increased drug poisonings and unsupported withdrawals.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has also disrupted the street supply of substances. The disruption has contributed to increased poisonings as drugs are cut with more potent substances to make the available supply last (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, 2020). Drug shortages may also be leading to the consumption of other harmful substances or more harmful patterns of drug use (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

The use of CK emergency health services (emergency department (ED) visits/emergency medical service (EMS) calls) related to suspected opioid poisonings and substance use has been elevated over the last year. In 2020 there were nearly double the number of suspected opioid-related EMS calls compared to 2019. Furthermore, CK experienced some of the highest rates of ED visits in the province for suspected opioid poisoning since the start of the pandemic. While opioid poisoning-related ED visits have decreased for the province overall since the state of emergency was declared, the number of opioid-related deaths has increased. In CK the number of confirmed opioid-related deaths for the first eight months of 2020 was already nearly twice as high as 2019, and the number of suspected drug-related deaths also increased compared to 2019.

Since the Harm Reduction Program Update Report submitted to Council in December 2019, there have been several enhancements to the Harm Reduction Program, partly in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

- Further expansion of naloxone distribution to clients at the CK Women's Centre, CMHA, Canadian Mental Health Association, Reach Out Chatham-Kent (ROCK) Missions, Hope Haven, the Medicine Unit at CKHA and the CK Emergency Housing operated by ESS. All emergency housing staff, including third-party security, have been trained to recognize and respond to overdoses.

- CK Fire Services has taken additional action to ensure staff are prepared to respond to opioid overdose situations by carrying naloxone kits in all fire vehicles.
- CK Public Health has educated local pharmacies about the naloxone distribution parameters.
- Pozitive Pathways has provided further training with existing needle syringe program (NSP) satellite sites. The NEO360 data tracking tool has allowed greater accountability in monitoring and managing data, which better informs inventory management and program planning.
- CK Public Health has developed a pre-test survey for NSP service users to understand (1) what is the best way to deliver an evaluation to them and (2) what to measure under "client satisfaction" with relation to CK Public Health's Harm Reduction Program. The pre-test survey and evaluation are expected to be delivered in 2021.
- In collaboration with Reach Out Chatham-Kent (ROCK Missions) and United Way of Chatham-Kent, CK Public Health applied for the Community Opioid Capacity Building (COM-CAP) Project. The goal of the project is to expand peer-led outreach interventions in CK.
- CK Public Health continues to pursue partnerships with service providers who already support people who use substances. CK Public Health is providing them with education, training, and harm reduction supplies to distribute to their direct service users, similar to the Naloxone Expansion Program.
- CK Public Health secured two sharps disposal units at (1) CK Public Health 435 Grand Ave. West, Chatham and (2) CK Community Health Centre, 808 Dufferin Ave., Wallaceburg.
- CK Public Health developed further resources related to safe sharps disposal practices (for example, community posters and signs).
- CK Public Health coordinated with community partners to respond to opioid poisonings. This included pushing out enhanced messaging through communication channels, which continue to alert those at-risk of opioid poisonings in CK and promote access to naloxone and other substance use services and supports.
- CK Public Health created content for National Addictions Awareness Week 2020 and shared information about local services and supports. CK Public Health also discussed the need to change how issues related to mental health and substance use are talked about and addressed.

Although CK Public Health has made several changes to the Harm Reduction Program, ongoing stigma, logistical, and financial limitations have impeded CK Public Health from further expanding the program. Individual and structural level stigma associated with substance use has created barriers that resist the acceptance and the expansion of the harm reduction approach. CK Public Health's budget for the NSP is used to (1) purchase sterile syringes, which are not supplied through the provincially funded Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program (OHRDP), (2) purchase sharps containers, and (3) fund sharps disposal for the NSP. However, the costs associated with delivering the program have consistently been trending upwards, this year in

particular, resulting in additional logistical and financial challenges when attempting to expand the Harm Reduction Program. As a result, to address the complex nature of substance use in CK and expand services and resources, additional support is needed.

1. The distribution model that includes community partner depots and the community outreach program.

Needle Syringe Program (NSP)

CK Public Health's NSP uses a hub and spoke distribution model. This model involves a three-way partnership between CK Public Health, Pozitive Pathways Community Services, and satellite site agencies. In a hub and spoke distribution model, supplies are initially stored at a central establishment and then delivered to multiple outlying locations. In CK Public Health's NSP, Pozitive Pathways is the central hub, while CK Public Health and satellite site agencies function as the outlying spokes to the hub. Adopting this method of operation has significantly increased efficiency and reduced overhead costs. The hub and spoke model has proved effective in other communities as well.

Currently, harm reduction supplies can be accessed at (1) CK Public Health, 177 King Street East, Chatham, (2) Shoppers Drug Mart, 30 McNaughton Avenue, Wallaceburg, and (3) McIntyre I.D.A. Pharmacy, 49 Talbot Street West, Blenheim. These facilities are all NSP satellite sites. From January 2019 to August 2020, approximately 38,886 kits have been distributed, with a combined approximate total of 8,171 transactions across all three NSP satellite sites.

CK Public Health has also partnered with the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance (CKHA) Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) Clinic and Medicine Unit to distribute harm reduction supplies to service users.

Before the pandemic, a CK Public Health Nurse would go to the Community Health Centre in Wallaceburg once a week to distribute harm reduction supplies.

Finally, mobile outreach deliveries to service users and all NSP satellite sites throughout CK is available on Fridays from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm through Pozitive Pathways Community Services. From January 2019 to August 2020, Pozitive Pathways distributed approximately 8,349 kits and has made approximately 271 transactions. Individuals that use the mobile outreach service indicate that they also gather and distribute supplies to their friends. From March to August 2020, there has been a 196 percent increase in the number of kits distributed and a 40 percent increase in the number of transactions through mobile outreach compared to the same time the previous year.

The Windsor Essex Community Health Centre (WECHC) Street Health Team, which focus primarily on Hepatitis C testing, treatment, and support in Chatham-Kent, also provides harm reduction outreach, including harm reduction supply distribution, on Thursdays in CK.

CK Public Health is aware of the limitations to the NSP. For example, one limitation is the number of locations where harm reduction supplies can currently be accessed in CK. Throughout consultations, community partners expressed the need for more satellite sites, particularly in Chatham and Wallaceburg, due to the high volume of transactions occurring at the existing sites. Community partners also expressed the need for expanded outreach services in CK. With satellite sites and outreach, community partners emphasized the importance of establishing positive rapport with clients and creating safe and welcoming environments for them to receive harm reduction services and supports. Additionally, community partners expressed the need for more education and promotion of substance use and harm reduction services in CK.

As a result, CK Public Health will continue to work in collaboration with Positive Pathways to facilitate the expansion of CK's NSP by engaging with service providers to establish new satellite sites. CK Public Health will also continue to explore and develop partnerships with service providers who are willing to distribute harm reduction supplies to their direct service users, similar to the Naloxone Expansion Program.

To address outreach services, CK Public Health, in collaboration with Reach Out Chatham-Kent (ROCK Missions) and United Way of Chatham-Kent, has applied for the Community Opioid Capacity Building (COM-CAP) Project to expand peer-led outreach interventions in CK. CK Public Health will also continue providing education and promoting substance use and harm reduction services in CK.

Naloxone Program

CK Public Health, King Street distributes free Naloxone kits to people at risk of opioid poisoning and their family and friends. Through CK Public Health, in 2018 a total of 184 kits were distributed, including 184 individuals trained, and in 2019 a total of 455 kits were distributed, and 342 individuals trained. In 2020, a total of 257 kits have been distributed, including 99 Individuals trained as of quarter two, ending September 30, 2020.

CK Public Health also coordinates the Naloxone Expansion Program for CK. Currently, CK Public Health has on-boarded eleven organizations to the Naloxone Expansion Program. Since the start of the Naloxone Expansion Program, a total of 187 Naloxone kits have been distributed through the program to people at risk of opioid poisoning and their family and friends.

To help address an increase in opioid-related deaths during the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry recently implemented an expanded access component to the program which allows Public Health Units to onboard organizations that were ineligible to participate. As a result, CK Public Health has begun identifying and on boarding potential partners.

Through the Ontario Naloxone Programs for Pharmacies, both nasal and injectable Naloxone is also available for free at participating pharmacies across CK, and a health card or identification is not required to access it. Pharmacists are also able to provide

two kits to an individual at one time. An individual accessing naloxone through a pharmacy can also do so as many times as they need. CK Public Health is working with local pharmacies to ensure they are aware of these distribution parameters. Through local pharmacies, a total of 1,420 Naloxone kits were distributed in 2018, 1,422 Naloxone kits were distributed in 2019, and 591 Naloxone kits have been distributed from January to May 2020.

From community partner consultations, CK Public Health heard that naloxone distribution and education appear to be accessible throughout CK. However, the further expansion of the program is still needed to continue increasing accessibility for people who use substances. Community partners also emphasized the importance of providing more than one naloxone kit at a time to individuals due to the ongoing concern of the safety of the circulating drug supply locally.

As a result, CK Public Health has begun identifying and onboarding more partners for the Expanded Access component to continue increasing the accessibility of Naloxone in CK. CK Public Health has also been distributing more than one kit to a client at a time and also encourages Naloxone distribution partners to distribute more than one kit to a client at a time as well. CK Public Health will also continue collaborating with community partners to expand access to Naloxone, and if successful in receiving funding through the COM-CAP Project, will expand peer-led outreach interventions in collaboration with ROCK Missions and United Way.

2. The bulk purchase of supplies for the program.

As the central hub, Pozitive Pathways orders harm reduction supplies free of charge from the provincially funded Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program (OHRDP). The OHRDP coordinates the distribution of harm reduction supplies to Needle Syringe Programs through a licensed distributor, providing sterile, single-use equipment with product information sheets to help prevent disease transmission and reduce the potential health risks associated with substance use (Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program, 2020). The OHRDP does not provide needles, syringes, or sharps containers, so these items are purchased by Pozitive Pathways in bulk to cut down on the costs per unit. The bulk harm reduction supplies are packaged into unique kits developed by Peer Packing Workers employed by Pozitive Pathways and are then distributed to NSP satellite sites and mobile outreach service users. NSP satellite sites submit an order for harm reduction supplies to Pozitive Pathways on Monday of each week, and those supplies are then delivered on Friday.

3. The 'Yellow Umbrella' mobile outreach service.

Pozitive Pathways offers a mobile outreach service called *Yellow Umbrella*, which provides mobile outreach direct to service users and deliveries to all NSP satellite sites throughout Chatham-Kent. Pozitive Pathways has established consistent outreach days and modes for clients to access harm reduction supplies, including naloxone via a mobile outreach service. Harm reduction supplies are accessible through mobile outreach on Fridays in CK.

Service user deliveries can take place in any location and do not require a permanent address. However, clients are requested to submit their order and coordinate a delivery location to provide Pozitive Pathways with the necessary time to prepare orders and confirm the delivery route. Clients can also give used harm reduction equipment to Pozitive Pathways mobile outreach service for safe disposal at CK Public Health, King Street. Through the mobile outreach service, Pozitive Pathways also collects used harm reduction supplies from NSP satellite sites, and arranges for the safe and proper disposal of those supplies at CK Public Health, King Street.

Distributing harm reduction supplies through mobile outreach provides an added mode of distribution, reaching people in areas not served by the satellite sites. Because of its reach, it is a complement to NSP satellite sites. This mode of distribution aims to fill gaps in service delivery and improve access to harm reduction supplies for clients who reside in rural areas and do not access satellite sites due to fears of being identified, distance and transportation issues, disability, among other reasons. However, CK Public Health is aware that there are limitations to the current mobile outreach service. Throughout consultations, community partners expressed the need for expanded and more flexible outreach services to be available in CK, particularly in response to the pandemic.

Community partners also highlighted challenges people who use substances face when using the current mobile outreach service. These challenges include (1) not always having access to a phone or email to place an order, (2) experiencing difficulties scheduling and submitting their order 48 hours before the delivery date, (3) struggling to coordinate a time and location for their supplies to be delivered, and (4) having difficulties determining exactly what and how much harm reduction supplies to order, so it is available.

To address the need for expanded and more flexible outreach services in CK, CK Public Health, in collaboration with ROCK Missions and United Way of Chatham-Kent, has applied for the COM-CAP Project.

4. Education for safe needle disposal.

When clients access CK Public Health's NSP through a satellite site or mobile outreach, they receive a small sharps disposal container for personal use and education regarding safe sharps disposal practices. CK Public Health also provides education over the phone or in-person to municipal staff and departments, local businesses, organizations, and/or residents on how to safely pick-up and dispose sharps found in the community. Currently, CK Public Health has the following educational resources/tools available on safe sharps disposal practices:

- Posters:
 - Found a Needle? (target audience: children/youth)
 - I Found a Needle. Now What? (target audience: adults/general public)
 - Keep Your Community Safe, Use a Sharps Disposal Bin (target audience: people who use substances)

- An instructional video detailing how to safely pick up and dispose of sharps found in the community
- Individual sharps disposal kits are available from CK Public Health for local businesses, organizations, and/or residents of CK
- CK Public Health, Safe Handling and Disposal of Sharps webpage

CK Public Health works to provide education on safe sharps disposal and supports the community with the management of improper disposal. However, through consultations with community partners, it is evident that further education is needed regarding safe sharps disposal practices for municipal staff and departments, local businesses, organizations, and the community. It is recommended that mandatory training be implemented for all municipal staff, students, and volunteers to complete upon hire and annually on safe sharps disposal practices.

CK Public Health also educates municipal staff and departments, local businesses, organizations, and the community on mental health and substance use to address stigma. Based on the findings of CK Public Health's 2019 Opioid Use and Related Harms Situational Assessment, as well as consultations for this report, it is evident that further education is needed to address mental health and substance use stigma in the community. Therefore, it is recommended that mandatory education be implemented for all municipal staff, students, and volunteers to complete upon hire and annually on mental health and substance use stigma. CK Public Health will also continue to provide education on mental health and substance use and partner with organizations, such as the Chatham-Kent Drug Awareness Council (CKDAC), to address mental health and substance use stigma in CK.

5. The number of locations where harm reduction supplies can be safely disposed of and options for outdoor needle disposal kiosks.

Below are the current community locations where used harm reduction supplies can be disposed of safely.

- Sharps can be brought to the following locations during office hours:
 - CK Public Health, King Street
 - McIntyre I.D.A Pharmacy, Blenheim
 - Shoppers Drug Mart, Wallaceburg
 - Yellow Umbrella Mobile Outreach
 - Chatham-Kent Community Health Centre, Wallaceburg
- 24 hour sharps disposal bins are located outdoors at:
 - CK Public Health, Grand Avenue
 - CK Public Health, King Street
- Individual sharps disposal kits are available from CK Public Health for local businesses, organizations, and/or residents of CK.
- CK Public Health can provide certain organizations with 24-hour sharps disposal bins.

- Most pharmacies will provide free sharps containers and disposal of medical sharps. To find a local pharmacy that takes back medical sharps, people can either contact the pharmacy of their choice and ask about their services or visit <http://healthsteward.ca/>.
- For household disposal, sharps can be dropped off on Household Hazardous Waste Day in rigid puncture-proof containers.
- Businesses and health care providers must obtain proper sharps disposal containers and arrange for a contract for disposal from a biomedical waste disposal company.

In CK, the estimated needle return rate was 27.5 percent in 2018 and 64.5 percent in 2019. These return rates indicate that sharps are either disposed of at different locations or disposed of improperly. CK Public Health continues to work with municipal staff and departments, and community partners to determine how to improve the safe disposal of used harm reduction equipment. However, stigma, logistical, and financial limitations have impeded CK Public Health from expanding safe disposal methods.

Strike et al. (2013) recommends providing multiple, convenient locations for safe disposal of used harm reduction equipment. In CK, used harm reduction equipment can be safely disposed of at (1) NSP satellite sites, (2) mobile outreach, and (3) indoor and outdoor sharps disposal bins. The 24-hour sharps disposal bins at both CK Public Health locations are used regularly, with minimal issues/concerns regarding used harm reduction equipment being found discarded improperly on or near the property. Many communities have used 24-hour sharps disposal bins outdoors, and some have even installed syringe vending machines—used to increase access to needles and syringes, and disposal services at times and locations not served by NSPs (Strike et al., 2013).

According to the Best Practice Recommendations for Canadian Harm Reduction Programs, evaluation data has shown that the installation of syringe vending machines does not result in an increase of discarded needles/syringes in the community. It also found that clients will use disposal bins attached or adjacent to syringe vending machines (Strike et al., 2013). Moreover, the Region of Waterloo recently released a report highlighting their multi-pronged sharps disposal strategy, which supports convenient access to harm reduction disposal options, as well as outreach based needle retrieval in the Waterloo Region. Disposal rates in the Waterloo Region increased significantly since 2018 following the introduction of their outdoor kiosk program, with return rates increasing from 46.1 percent in 2017 to 77 percent in 2019 (Region of Waterloo Public Health, 2020).

While establishing appropriate locations for 24-hours sharps disposal bins has been a great challenge, determining a cost-effective way to have those bins monitored, maintained, and emptied is an even greater challenge. CK Public Health can provide some organizations with a bin along with education and training on safe sharps disposal, but CK Public Health does not have the funds available to contract a biohazardous waste disposal company to empty and maintain the bins on an ongoing basis. Many community partners that have expressed interest in having a 24-hour

sharps disposal bin installed outdoors on their property do not have the funding or resources available to contract a biohazardous waste disposal company. At the same time, they are not comfortable with their staff emptying and maintaining the bins on an ongoing basis.

Currently, municipal departments bring sharps found in the community to CK Public Health, King Street, to be disposed of safely. However, as highlighted in the motion, municipal staff occasionally bring sharps found to satellite sites that cannot take back sharps from municipal departments. When municipal staff bring sharps found in the community to CK Public Health, King Street, instead of bringing the sharps indoors to be disposed of safely, municipal staff occasionally dispose of the sharps in the 24-hour sharps disposal bin located outdoors. As such, the 24-hour sharps disposal bin is regularly full, resulting in Public Health Nurses emptying it often. If municipal staff need to dispose of a substantial number of sharps, it may be difficult to dispose of them safely due to the limited amount of biohazardous storage available at CK Public Health, King Street. It is also difficult to dispose of a substantial number of sharps because of the lack of Municipal sharps disposal options available in CK. Although it is the responsibility of property management at apartment/commercial buildings to dispose of sharps found on their property, CK Public Health often receives requests from property management to dispose of substantial amounts of sharps since (1) Household Hazardous Waste Day is only offered one day per year and (2) there are limited sharps disposal options available in CK. Satellite sites and CK Public Health, King Street, do not have the capacity or resources available to accept used harm reduction supplies in substantial amounts. As a result, this factor may influence a person's ability to properly dispose of sharps.

Strong collaboration from multiple municipal departments and community partners is needed to address the gaps surrounding sharps disposal in CK. Many communities have installed multiple 24-hour sharps disposal bins in geographically relevant but also discrete locations and have established contracts with biohazardous waste disposal companies to empty and maintain those bins regularly. These communities have also developed special waste depots for sharps disposal and other biohazardous waste. As a result, it is recommended that seven 24-hour sharps disposal bins be installed on and a contract with a biohazardous waste disposal company be established to regularly empty the bins. Increasing the number of sharps disposal bins throughout the community may reduce the number of improperly discarded sharps. Also, it is recommended that administration explore options for a sharps disposal waste depot for the community.

6. The municipal process for when calls are received regarding needles found out in the community.

If a needle is found on public property (for example, sidewalks, streets, parks, trails, etc.), individuals are to contact the Chatham-Kent Customer Service Department at 519-360-1998. The Customer Service Department will ask a series of questions to confirm that the needle is on public property, and once confirmed, will complete an ACR to arrange for the appropriate department to pick up and dispose of the needle. If a

needle is found on private property (for example, a home or business), individuals are asked to contact CK Public Health at 519-355-1071 for safe handling and disposal methods. CK Public Health does not pick up and dispose of needles. Needles are to be brought to CK Public Health, King Street, in a puncture-proof, sealable container to be disposed of safely.

Limited knowledge, education, and training on the safe handling and disposal of sharps, along with not having the proper equipment/tools, leads to the needle found process often not being followed. As such, challenges surround the documentation of locations where sharps are found in CK. To further these challenges, municipal departments also use different methods of tracking and reporting if/when sharps are found.

In collaboration with municipal departments CK Public Health will engage in quality improvement activities to streamline processes and ensure a client-centred focus throughout the process of a needle being found in the community. CK Public Health will also collaborate with municipal departments to develop a coordinated approach to document sharps found in the community. Developing shared infrastructure and processes to document the number of calls about sharps found in the community, where sharps are found (for example, through GIS mapping), and the number of sharps found will give partners a better understanding of the issue and support departments to target any interventions (for example, those discussed in section five) in "hot spot" areas.

7. Other Considerations.

Community partners not only highlighted the need for expanded NSP satellite sites, outreach, and naloxone distribution and training, but also advocated for supervised consumption sites and services in CK due to increased suspected drug poisonings. International and Canadian evidence clearly demonstrates that supervised consumption sites and services save lives, connect people to social services, and serve as pathways to treatment (Government of Canada, 2020). When properly established, supervised consumption sites and services:

1. Reduce the risk of drug poisonings because people are not using alone,
2. Connect people to social services, such as housing, employment assistance, and food banks
3. Provide or connect people to healthcare and treatment,
4. Reduce public substance use and discarded harm reduction equipment,
5. Reduce spread of infectious diseases,
6. Reduce strain on emergency medical services, and
7. Provide space for people to connect with staff and peers (Government of Canada, 2020).

Community partners also identified the need for improved follow-up after an individual experiences a drug poisoning. Safe consumption sites and services would support this, however it would be important to explore other innovative ways to support individuals

who have experienced a drug poisoning. For example, expanding the mobile crisis unit to include social workers who would attend calls not criminal in nature.

Community partners also expressed the need for:

- an expanded withdrawal management, treatment, and recovery services and supports;
- a unified and coordinated response to advocate for increased funding for safer supply initiatives and for the movement to decriminalize people who possess controlled substances for personal use; and
- a greater focus on substance use prevention and recommended that youth be involved in all aspects.

All of the above can be addressed by a comprehensive community drug strategy that is flexible to changing local needs and conditions.

In the 2020 budget process Council approved \$110,000 from reserves to fund the coordination of a community drug strategy. Due to the demands of CK Public Health's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this has not been implemented. This project will proceed in 2021 when CK Public Health is able to allocate time and staff resources.

However, during the consultation and preparation for this report, the Health Unit identified an urgent need for safe sharps disposal bins across Chatham-Kent. Administration believes that the community drug strategy will meet it's mandate and stay within the remaining \$81,500.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendations in this report support the following areas of strategic focus:

Economic Prosperity:

Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy

A Healthy and Safe Community:

Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth

People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

Environmental Sustainability:

Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendations in this report support the following critical success factors:

Financial Sustainability:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable

Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership

Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors

Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

The Public Works and Human Resources and Organizational Development divisions were consulted on the writing of the recommendations in this report.

As well, the Health Unit consulted with a variety of municipal departments and community partners in the development of the overall Harm Reduction Program. The following community partner organizations were consulted:

- Bluewater Methadone Clinic
- Chatham-Kent Community Health Centres
- Members of Chatham-Kent Council
- Members of the Municipal Drug Strategy Coordinators Network of Ontario representing municipal-led drug strategies across the province
- Pozitive Pathways Community Services (formerly AIDS Committee of Windsor)
- Reach Out Chatham-Kent (ROCK Missions)
- Shopper's Drug Mart, Wallaceburg
- The Chatham-Kent Drug Awareness Council
- United Way of Chatham-Kent
- Wallaceburg Community Roundtable
- Windsor Essex Community Health Centre

Financial Implications

The requests for \$10,500 for the purchase and installation of seven sharps disposal bins and the \$18,000 for the emptying and disposal of sharps will be funded from the previously approved 2020 drug strategy.

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Attachment: None

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