



Canadian Centre
on Substance Abuse
Centre canadien **de lutte**
contre les toxicomanies

Partnership. Knowledge. Change.
Collaboration. Connaissance. Changement.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement on International Overdose Awareness Day in Canada

Ottawa, August 31, 2016 — As Canada's only agency with a legislated national mandate to reduce the harms of alcohol and other drugs on Canadian society, CCSA is proud to support International Overdose Awareness Day, and to join organizations and individuals around the world to raise awareness about drug overdoses and reduce the stigma of a drug-related death.

Together with our partners, CCSA will continue to prevent and reduce drug-related harm by supporting evidence-based policy and practice. We will continue to lead work in support of [First Do No Harm \(FDNH\) recommendations](#) by mobilizing individual and collective efforts to achieve impact on the major health and social issue of problematic substance use, including overdose.

Within the FDNH framework, work is underway to identify and promote appropriate opioid-prescribing practices and develop consistent pan-Canadian prescription monitoring programs to identify and educate healthcare providers who may be over-prescribing. Leading authorities are developing competencies that will inform the education of prescribers at all levels and at all stages of a medical professional's career, including graduation and continuing medical education. Furthermore, care pathways have been developed that outline best practices in treatment for individuals at risk for, or experiencing harms from, prescription drugs like opioids, stimulants and sedatives. Work is also being undertaken to remove barriers to access to life-saving overdose prevention training and tools.

In addition, CCSA and the [Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use](#) produce drug alerts and bulletins. This national network of partners assembles information from a variety of sources to inform Canadians and stakeholders about [emerging drug use trends](#) or topics of immediate concern such as [fentanyl](#) and associated topics such as access to [naloxone](#). By identifying emerging and longer-term trends, we are able to proactively inform prevention and treatment planning and responses.

That is just a snapshot of work CCSA is leading at the national level with partners in the field. There remains much more we can and must do to prevent lives lost and shield families from this despair.

CCSA is proud to be part of a movement that provides an opportunity for people to rally behind those impacted by overdose, a movement that recognizes that addiction and overdose are health issues that require care, compassion and treatment. We also recognize that those with health issues like pain and addiction deserve treatment and help. We must stop judging addiction as though it were a moral failing or choice. It is a serious health issue. Fighting stigma tied to addiction issues is a greater challenge we must all embrace.

CCSA will continue to work to reduce the potential harms associated with prescription and illicit drug use. And today, let's take a moment to reflect on those lost — and let that emotion translate into action as we move forward and aim to prevent such losses in the future.

Media contact: media@ccsa.ca | Twitter: @CCSACanada



Canadian Centre
on Substance Abuse
Centre canadien **de lutte**
contre les toxicomanies

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse changes lives by bringing people and knowledge together to reduce the harm of alcohol and other drugs on society. We partner with public, private and non-governmental organizations to improve the health and safety of Canadians.

CCSA activities and products are made possible through a financial contribution from Health Canada. The views of CCSA do not necessarily represent the views of the Government of Canada.