



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Use  
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Statement by Rita Notarandrea, CEO, on Recovery Month

**Ottawa, September 11, 2017** — The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) is pleased to add its voice in support of Recovery Month in order to build awareness, challenge stigma and celebrate the fact that people can and **do** recover from addiction.

CCSA's mission is to address issues of substance use in Canada by providing national leadership and harnessing the power of evidence to generate coordinated action.

CCSA applauds the coordinated action on recovery, which will happen throughout the month of September when communities across Canada will host recovery events and shine the spotlight on problematic substance use and addiction. These events will draw attention to the stories of individuals who found a pathway to recovery, and the needs of those who are still charting their path to recovery and an improved quality of life.

For this Recovery Month, Canada's opioid crisis, and the unprecedented number of overdoses and deaths, looms large. The health and social impacts of this crisis on individuals, families and communities are devastating, and the healthcare system is struggling to cope. The opioid crisis requires involvement by the people and organizations who lead education, prevention, treatment and long-term recovery initiatives, working in close coordination with the decision makers who set the course for action.

To this end, CCSA looks forward to working collaboratively with Canada's new Minister of Health, the Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, and her provincial and territorial colleagues in reforming the system of care to ensure access to much-needed services and support for opioid misuse, problematic substance use and addiction. We know that impactful reform requires cross-disciplinary collaboration using evidence-based best practices and tools to address comprehensively the needs of each individual, and CCSA is working to do its part.

We know recovery is possible, achievable and sustainable with access to the right evidence-based treatments, supports and quality services. That is why CCSA is leading a number of activities (please see the attached Backgrounder) that are contributing to increasing understanding of an often misunderstood issue, and providing policy makers and experts in the field with the evidence and the resources to inform their approaches.

A trusted counsel, CCSA will continue to provide national guidance by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives to inspire collective action. Our efforts, like so many others, will continue beyond Recovery Month as we work to achieve our vision of a healthier Canadian society where evidence transforms approaches to substance use.

Across the country, Canadians are engaging in conversations and storytelling about recovery and reinforcing what is possible. Without question, recovery from addiction **is** possible. This month, and every one that follows, let us remember that a person who is ready to embrace recovery and improve their quality of life is a person with a health condition who is asking for help; asking for nothing more than the care they need and deserve. Their voice and the voices of so many others who are at different points in their journey deserve to be heard and their needs addressed.

To help share these important messages and findings about recovery, CCSA has created a [communications toolkit](#) designed to facilitate public discussions on the survey findings. The toolkit,



which includes posters, infographics, social media images and other content, is available on the CCSA [website](#) and can be used throughout September, and beyond, to facilitate discussion on recovery.

Speak up. Speak often. We're listening.

Rita Notarandrea, M.H.Sc., C.H.E.  
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Visit [RecoveryDayCanada.com](http://RecoveryDayCanada.com) for more information on events and activities throughout Canada.

Rita Notarandrea will be speaking at this year's [Recovery Capital Conference of Canada](#) event (Vancouver, September 7–8) and the [Recovery Day Ottawa](#) event (September 23).



## Backgrounder on CCSA's Initiatives in Relation to Recovery

### Changing the Conversation: Life in Recovery from Addiction In Canada

In 2015, CCSA hosted the first-ever National Summit on Addiction Recovery to put forth a common vision and overarching principles to guide a strength-based recovery approach to the treatment and care of substance use disorders in Canada, now known as [A National Commitment to Recovery from the Disease of Addiction in Canada](#).

As its next step, CCSA established the National Recovery Advisory Committee (NRAC), made up of individuals with lived experience to inform and guide recovery related activities. To that end, CCSA and NRAC undertook the first national survey of people in recovery from alcohol and other drugs. The Life in Recovery from Addiction in Canada survey was conducted in 2016 and the [full technical report](#) was released in May 2017.

The survey gathered information and stories from 855 people across Canada who generously shared information on their experiences with addiction and the barriers they faced. More importantly, it describes their journey of recovery: what encouraged them to seek recovery, the supports that helped and the quality of life they have experienced since attaining recovery.

For the first time in Canada, we have a detailed picture of the lives and experiences of people in recovery and it is a good news story. The results showed that recovery is linked to a return to positive citizenship: engagement with family, friends, the community and the workforce. A remarkable 91% of participants in the survey reported their quality of life was either excellent, very good or good after recovery had been initiated.

These findings provide hope for individuals and families affected by addiction and give much-needed evidence to service providers and policy makers to enable informed decisions that reflect lived experience. Results from the Life in Recovery from Addiction in Canada survey will be used to increase understanding and address the stigma associated with addiction and recovery, drive investment in treatment and recovery support services, and improve overall access, thereby removing barriers to recovery.

### **Moving Towards a Recovery Oriented System of Care: A Resource for Service Providers and Decision Makers**

As part of its efforts to increase understanding and reduce barriers to recovery, later this month, CCSA will be releasing *Moving Towards a Recovery Oriented System of Care: A Resource for Service Providers and Decision Makers*. This resource will provide actionable examples of policies and practices that service providers can implement to support the principles of recovery that are outlined in the National Commitment to Recovery from the Disease of Addiction. This resource highlights the six principles of recovery:

**There are many pathways in recovery:** A variety of interventions and approaches can lead to successful long-term recovery. There is no one pathway in recovery that works for all those struggling with addiction and as a result, a successful journey can be different for each person.

**Recovery requires collaboration:** A recovery-focused system of care includes collaboration between service providers and community support systems, as well as between professionals across health care and social service sectors.



**Recovery is a personal journey toward wellbeing:** Recovery is unique to the individual with optimal services tailored to strengths, needs, perceptions and experiences, including trauma and mental health issues.

**Recovery extends beyond the individual:** The recovery process includes not only the individual, but the individual's family, friends, workplace and community. Everybody can play a role in supporting an individual's recovery.

**Recovery is multidimensional:** Recovery involves addressing the multiple dimensions of a person's health in addition to their substance use.

**Recovery involves everyone:** Everyone can contribute to creating a culture and society that is compassionate, understanding and supportive of people in recovery and those struggling with addiction. This begins with overcoming stigma and dispelling the common myths that are associated with both having a substance use disorder and being in recovery.

Selected findings from the Life in Recovery from Addiction in Canada survey are also included in this resource to highlight the experiences and journeys of people in recovery, and illustrate the relevance of these principles. This resource is a living document. CCSA will continue to update it to reflect the perspective and feedback from service providers and decision makers, as well as the latest evidence and emerging research.



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CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.

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