



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Use  
and Addiction

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## Time to Kickstart the Conversation on Substance Use in Older Canadians

**Key report from Canada's leading voice on substance use and addiction provides evidence-based knowledge for policy makers**

**Ottawa, April 26, 2018** — As Canadian society ages, with adults 55 and over representing the fastest growing subgroup, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) is announcing the release of *Improving Quality of Life: Substance Use and Aging*. This report, the latest in CCSA's Substance Use in Canada series, highlights the need to take the impacts of substance use and misuse into account when planning for the future of Canada's healthcare system and when addressing the needs of older adults.

"As a society, we need to start talking more about problematic substance use in older adults," said Rita Notarandrea, CCSA's CEO. "Much like youth, older adults experience significant physiological, psychological and social change. It's a period of rapid, dynamic and difficult transitions in life, and older Canadians can be especially vulnerable. Until now, there has been a lack of understanding of and research into this important segment of Canadian society, and our report is designed not only to close the knowledge gap, but also to support more effective prevention and intervention programs aimed at addressing substance use among older adults."

As the largest-growing segment of the population ages, so will the number of adults who use alcohol and other drugs. The metabolism of an older person is less capable of processing substances, and the negative effects of alcohol or other drug use can have real and lasting impacts on this segment of the population. This report from CCSA helps to fill the current gaps in knowledge and looks to contribute to healthy aging.

"There were two key questions that underpinned the research for this report," said Ms. Notarandrea: "How can we help people age in a healthy way? And how can we ensure they have the supports they need to sustain a good quality of life in their later years? These are the types of questions policy makers, legislators, public servants and healthcare professionals will need to answer as this demographic continues to grow. The expectation that the issue will become more prevalent in the coming years reinforces the need for action now."

Download a copy of *Improving Quality of Life: Substance Use and Aging* from the CCSA website.

### Media contact

TS Buchanan

Tel.: 613-806-7176 | Email: [media@ccsa.ca](mailto:media@ccsa.ca) | Twitter: [@CCSACanada](https://twitter.com/CCSACanada)



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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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