

Position Statement



September 5, 2017

Harm reduction services to address opioid crisis and support public health prevention

Background

The rapidly growing numbers of fatal and non-fatal opioid overdoses in North America and around the world are being called an “opioid crisis.” The local impact of this epidemic is evident in the rising number of preventable overdoses and overdose deaths in Toronto. Harm reduction services are working diligently throughout Toronto to respond to this public health crisis and prevent deaths from overdose.

Our Position

Sherbourne Health Centre believes that harm reduction services are a critical means of responding to this public health crisis. Initiatives like Naloxone distribution, supervised injection sites and timely access to treatment preserve life and support positive outcomes for people who use drugs.

Sherbourne Health Centre practices from a harm reduction philosophy to provide programs and services for people who use drugs and their allies. This includes distribution of harm reduction supplies, including safer injecting and smoking kits and Naloxone. We also provide education and overdose prevention training, counselling, and referrals to treatment.

Sherbourne Health Centre will continue to work with our community and partners, including frontline workers, healthcare providers, and people who use drugs, to enable an effective and coordinated approach to prevent further avoidable deaths.