

Community Message

March 23, 2022

It has come to our attention that literature was recently mailed out to the Cambridge community that provided misinformation about Consumption and Treatment Sites, and we would like to take this opportunity to both respond and provide accurate information.

Substance use is not a political issue, it is a matter of life and death for so many in our community. Consumption and Treatment Sites are proven to work, both in saving lives and addressing many community concerns that come with substance use. These programs work in many surrounding communities, including Kitchener, Guelph, London, and St. Catharines.

As experts in this field and service providers, we welcome the opportunity to educate and explain, rather than further stigmatizing people who use drugs.

What is a Consumption and Treatment Site?

- A Consumption and Treatment Site (CTS) is a health service that provides a safe, hygienic space for people to inject pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of staff.
- People are provided sterile injection supplies, education on safe injection, overdose prevention and intervention, medical and social work services and referrals.
- A CTS is a low barrier, life-saving, time-limited service that offers targeted supports in order to address the opioid crisis.

What are the benefits of a CTS?

International and Canadian research identifies key benefits, both for people using the service and for the community, including:

- ✓ Reducing the number of drug overdoses
- ✓ Reducing the risk factors such as HIV and hepatitis
- ✓ Increasing the use of detox and drug treatment services
- ✓ Connecting people with other health and social services
- ✓ Reducing the amount of publicly discarded needles
- ✓ Reducing the cost of health care services

A service provider organization is in the process of completing the required and extensive application to the province to obtain approval and funding. There are many organizations working to provide support to those experiencing harm related to substance use in our community, and the CTS will be one part of a broad network of treatment and health services.

What can you do?

- Remember compassion. The current opioid crisis is far-reaching, and unfortunately Cambridge residents are not immune to its impacts.
- Send people in need of support to the Drop-In at 150 Main, a safe and welcoming space.
- Join the conversation. Educate yourself and others to help de-stigmatize addiction in our communities.

Opening a CTS in Cambridge is intended to reduce overdoses and related deaths. Too many people have died and will continue to die if we continue to push this issue into politics rather than leading with facts, figures, and proof.

We look forward to engaging with the community moving forward and educating people about harm reduction. We will continue working to save the lives of sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, uncles and aunts, friends and family members, people who are loved and who are struggling with substance use.

For questions or media inquiries, please contact Kristin Kerr, CND OHT Mental Health and Addiction Steering Committee Lead at kkerr@stonehengetc.com or Kristina Eliashevsky, CND OHT Transformation Lead at kristinae@lang.org.