

The Works – 25 Years of Harm Reduction Services in Toronto

**Board of Health
September 22, 2015**

- The Works is Toronto Public Health's harm reduction program for people who use drugs
 - Harm reduction supply distribution (injection and crack smoking)
 - Counselling and support
 - Education and Awareness
 - Peer to peer programming
 - Overdose prevention – the POINT Program
 - Low threshold Opioid substitution therapy – Methadone Works
 - Testing for HIV, Hepatitis, Syphilis
 - Vaccinations
 - Referrals for housing, mental health, counselling, treatment, etc.

The Works – 25 years and counting

- Services at 277 Victoria Street
- Mobile service operates 6 days a week, between 6:30pm and 11:30pm
- Partnerships with 50 community agencies serving drug users for distribution of harm reduction supplies and education.



The Works – 25 years and counting

- The Works was established in 1989:
 - International concerns about HIV rates for injection drug users
 - International response to reducing HIV for drug users – needle exchange
 - Prevention of discarded needles
 - Recognition that early intervention would keep HIV rates in check for this population
- Original program offered needles, condoms, support, counselling
- Including testing, vaccination, other supports.

The Works – 25 years and counting:

- In 2011, the Works launched a new overdose prevention program - POINT (Preventing Overdose in Toronto):
- POINT includes a “take home” naloxone – opioid overdose kit for people at risk
- The Works offers training on POINT on how to use the kits (for users, friends and families of those at risk)
- By August 2015, almost 2000 kits distributed, with 300 documented overdose reversals



The Works – 25 years and counting: Achievements

- First needle exchange program in Ontario – started 1989
- Only public health agency to operate Methadone program in Canada
- First public health agency operated take home naloxone program in Canada
- HIV rate for people who inject drugs in Toronto is lower than similar size cities in North America
- Almost 85,000 service visits to The Works and partner agencies in 2014
- Over 1.3 million needles distributed in 2014 to people who inject drugs in Toronto