

iPHARE: Harm Reduction and overdose prevention services at Toronto Shelters



Land Acknowledgement



We acknowledge the land we are on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Williams Treaty signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

Question period



After the presentation participants can ask questions and make comments in TWO ways.

Participants can:

1. Type questions into the Q & A box on the lower right of the screen (computer only)
2. Verbally ask questions on audio (computer and phone) by raising their hands

We will not be screening calls.

Meeting recording



Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded and your opinions, statements and voice will become part of a public record.

Participants are asked not to share any personal information about themselves and other people, such as name, address and contact information within the meeting. If you wish to discuss a private matter, please contact us at iphare@Toronto.ca

Panel



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| Gord Tanner | Director, Homelessness Initiatives and Prevention,
Shelter Support and Housing Administration, City of Toronto |
| Shaun Hopkins | Manager, Needle Exchange, Toronto Public Health |
| David Reycraft | Director, Housing Services, Dixon Hall |
| Bruce Davis | Facilitator, Public Progress |

The need



- Canada is in the midst of an overdose crisis inside a pandemic inside an affordable housing crisis.
- Estimates are that there were 500+ opioid related overdose deaths in Toronto in 2020, up from about 300 in the past two years.
 - Drug toxicity: carfentanil, benzodiazepine and other drugs in drug supply
 - Using drugs alone is single biggest risk factor and this has been exacerbated by COVID 19
- In response to COVID 19, Toronto shelter standards and capacity were modified and 2,500+ shelter hotel rooms were opened in 2020.
- An unintended consequence of COVID 19 response is an increase in shelter overdoses. 37 shelter overdose deaths in 2020 up from 5 in 2018.
- Overdose deaths are devastating and they also affect the health of first responders, harm reduction workers, shelter workers.

The response



Toronto Public Health has revised its Overdose Action Plan and has called on federal and provincial governments to take action on treatment, managed drug supply, decriminalization and harm reduction measures.

On November 16, 2020, Medical Officer of Health instructed to work with City's shelter division (SSHA) to increase harm reduction efforts.

Integrated Prevention and Harm Reduction (iPHARE): TPH and other community programs are working with shelter operators to introduce a range of prevention and harm reduction measures, including:

- Peer or staff witnessing
- Managed opioid supply
- Wellness checks
- Naloxone distribution
- Harm reduction supply distribution, harm reduction training and support
- Overdose prevention, recognition and response training
- Introduction of Urgent Public Health Needs Sites (aka consumption treatment services)

Urgent Public Health Needs Sites (Consumption Treatment Services)



- Designed to protect public health and public safety.
- Requires Health Canada approval under Section 56(1) of the federal *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*; no public consultation is required. This initiative was created by Health Canada to respond to urgent need to respond to overdoses during COVID 19.
- If approved, UPHNS located at selected shelters **would be for shelter residents only**. Not all shelters will get a UPHNS.
- Shelter residents to consume illicit drugs on-site under the supervision of trained staff.
- Additional benefits: reduction in public drug use and discarding of drug paraphernalia; reduction in adverse effects on first responders and harm reduction workers and shelter workers.

Responding to evolving need



- The City of Toronto's Shelter Support and Housing Administration Division is working with Toronto Public Health and Community Health Centre partners to assess priority shelter sites for iPHARE activities based on demand and operational capacity.
- TPH is currently recruiting and training staff, looking at sites, site fit-up, health and safety, Health Canada approvals.
- One Urgent Public Health Need Site has been approved by Health Canada and is operating in a start-up mode at 65 Dundas Street East.
- The range of harm reduction measures are being evaluated for each site based on what makes sense.

How to ask questions



To type your question:

Click the “...” button at the bottom of the video window and select “Q&A”

Type your question in the box on the lower right-hand of your screen + click send

To ask your question over the phone:

Dial: 416-915-6530

Access code: XXXXXX

Press *3 to raise and lower your hand

To ask your question out loud:

“Connect audio” at the bottom of the video window

To test your microphone click “Audio & Video” at the top of the video screen and click “Speaker and Microphone Settings...”

To raise your hand - click the “Participants” button on the lower right side, then click the hand symbol at the bottom right of the list of names

Once your hand icon is “raised”, your name will be placed into a queue.

The facilitator will select people in the queue with their hands raised and will unmute the speaker and announce their first name or the digits of their telephone number.

Submit questions in writing



Participants can:

Type questions into the Q & A box on the lower right of the screen (computer only)

Submit a form from the City's website [Toronto.ca/OverdosePrevention](https://toronto.ca/OverdosePrevention)

Email questions to iphare@toronto.ca

Questions and Answers will be used to updated Q & A information online and future E-updates