



A Statement from Downtown East Toronto Ontario Health Team (DET OHT) Regarding the Closure of Supervised Drug Consumption Sites

On August 20, 2024, the Ontario government [announced](#) the closure of supervised drug consumption sites within 200 metres of schools and child care centres no later than March 31, 2025. This closure includes nine provincially-funded sites and one self-funded site, located in Ottawa, Guelph, Hamilton, Thunder Bay, Kitchener and Toronto.

The announcement also introduced new investments for the creation of 19 new Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs to support people affected by drug use.

Although DET OHT welcomes the continued investments in treatment options and supportive housing aimed at connecting people who use drugs, the closure of supervised consumption sites will significantly limit the treatment options available to people who use substances and those who provide care. We support a system of care that encompasses the full range of addiction treatment, including harm-reduction services.

Among the ten sites scheduled to close by the end of FY 2024-25, five are located in Toronto, **including three operated by our Team Members (member organizations): Regent Park Community Health Centre, South Riverdale Community Health Centre, and The Neighbourhood Group.**

Toronto's drug consumption sites were launched in 2017 in response to the city's opioid crisis, where annual opioid fatalities rose by over 300% from 137 in 2015 to 574 in 2021, to provide safer drug use spaces and reduce associated health risks for its communities ([Rammohan et al., 2024](#)). The implementation of these consumption sites led to a two-thirds reduction in overdose deaths in surrounding neighborhoods, an effect not observed in areas without these sites ([Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation, 2024](#)). As evidenced by recent [federal government data](#), there have been zero fatal overdoses at supervised drug consumption sites between March 2020 and May 2024. This aligns with international and Canadian evidence showing that consumption sites effectively prevent fatal overdoses, connect people to essential medical and social services, including primary care, and reduce public drug use ([Greenwald et al., 2022](#); [Levengood et al. 2021](#)).

We remain committed to improving access to health and social services, including harm-reduction, for the Downtown East Toronto population through care models similar to Sherbourne Health's [Take Home Naloxone Program](#) and [Harm Reduction Peer Navigation Program](#), Unity Health Toronto's [Mental Health and Addictions Services](#), and Fred Victor's [Harm Reduction Services](#).

As the next step, DET OHT will work closely with its Team Members, community members, and other partners within the OHT environment to develop an effective advocacy approach for expanding access to the complete spectrum of treatment and other essential support for people who use substances.

We will keep all our partners informed with updates as we assess the new policy and potential funding opportunities.