

TO: Chair and Members of the Finance & Facilities Committee

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health / CEO

DATE: 2018 June 7

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## TEMPORARY OVERDOSE PREVENTION SITE EXPANDED HOURS AND EVALUATION

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that the Finance & Facilities Committee recommend that the Board of Health:*

- 1) Receive Report No. 028-18FFC re: Temporary Overdose Prevention Site (TOPS) Expanded Hours and Evaluation for information; and*
- 2) Approve the allocation of up to \$50,000 for the expansion of hours of operation of the TOPS and the enhanced evaluation plan, recognizing that a portion of these costs may at some point be funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.*

### **Key Points**

- Information from multiple datasets and the recent warning by London Police that new forms of fentanyl have arrived in the region.
- The Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario recently reported that nine opioid-related deaths occurred in the London region last November and December.
- Expanding TOPS hours will help meet the demand, and some increased costs are expected. Additional funding will be sought from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.
- Additional evaluation activities will be conducted beginning in July.

### **Background**

With the approval of funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the granting of an exemption under the Criminal Code, the first TOPS site in Ontario opened in London on February 12, 2018. Between February 12 and May 27 there were 3,234 visits to the site, with approximately 1,100 unique clients, and 6 overdoses reversed. With surveillance data indicating there is a steady increase in presence of Fentanyl in the region and nine opioid-related deaths last November and December, there is a need to expand the hours of operation at the TOPS site to ensure those who are consuming drugs have access to a clean supervised environment.

### **Expanded TOPS Hours and Cost**

Increased hours for TOPS would increase costs for security, supplies, and consumption room staff. Currently the hours of operation for TOPS are: Monday to Friday, 10:00 am until 4:00 pm, with staff working 9:30 am until 5:00 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm, with staff working 10:30 am until 5:00 pm; and closed on statutory holidays. Staff plan to expand hours such that the service is open until 8:00 pm on weekdays, and 10:00 am until 7:00 pm on weekends and holidays. The estimated cost for the expanded hours from June 18, 2018 until the temporary exemption expires August 12, 2018 is \$30,793.28. See the budget in ([Appendix A](#)).

## Enhanced Evaluation with Western University

An essential component of TOPS is the evaluation of the impact that it has had on the clients who use the facility, the staff who work within the facility, and neighboring residents and business, as well as opportunities for improvement. Findings from an evaluation will inform the preparations for potential permanent Supervised Consumption Facilities, and help answer key questions from the public and stakeholders that came up during community consultations in the Fall of 2017.

The majority of the evaluation activities will be performed by the Program Planning and Evaluation Team. However, MLHU is also engaging researchers at Centre for Research on Health Equity & Social Inclusion at Western University to support a narrative inquiry to explore the life stories of participants and deeply engage with the TOPs clients. This methodology increases the individual's control over how their stories and realities are communicated compared to traditional surveys and semi-structured interviews. The expected incremental cost of this method of evaluation will be between \$10,000 and \$20,000. The research proposal currently in development and the budget will be tailored to leverage existing MLHU evaluation resources.

## Next Steps

At the meeting of the Board of Health on December 14, 2017, the Board directed staff to bring the necessary resources to bear to ensure successful operation of a Temporary Opioid Prevention Site in London in response to the public health emergency recognized by the provincial Minister of Health and Long-Term Care that month. Board approval of these specific expenditures will help ensure that the related projects move forward expeditiously.

This report prepared by the Sexual Health Team, Environmental Health Infectious Disease Division and Program Planning & Evaluation Team, Health Organization Division.



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