

Vision

A caring, inclusive, and safe community that works collaboratively to reduce and eliminate the harms associated with drugs and alcohol.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles grounded the development of the *Middlesex-London Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy* and will continue to guide its implementation:

- Community Strengths-Based
- Evidence Informed
- Non-Stigmatizing
- Accessible
- Locally Relevant
- Collaborative
- Hopeful
- Responsive to Barriers
- Action-Oriented & Results Driven
- Culturally Safe
- Inclusive
- Equity Focused
- Reconciliation Aware



Middlesex-London Community Drug & Alcohol Strategy Stratégie communautaire de lutte contre la drogue et l'alcool

Status Report (2019/2020)

May 2020

Introduction

The Middlesex-London Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy: A Foundation for Action was finalized and released in October 2018. Based on the dedication of many partners, extensive consultation with the London and Middlesex community, and grounded in a 4-pillar approach, the Strategy laid out 23 recommendations with 98 associated actions as a roadmap to long-term community change. A total of 59 actions were identified as priorities for years 1-3.

This status update provides a snapshot of actions and successes achieved since the release of the Strategy report. *The Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy (CDAS)* was informed by a dedicated community already taking action. As such, the items in this report highlight not only work accomplished directly through the CDAS, but purposefully acknowledges the broader work of others in moving CDAS goals and recommendations forward.

At the time of writing, 34 of the 59 priority action items have progressed or been completed through comprehensive efforts and collaboration in the community. Another 8 action items outside of the first 3-year priorities are at various stages of implementation.

Community Work Supporting the CDAS

Over the past many months, much has been accomplished in our community. Initiatives that correspond to the Strategy recommendations and actions have been created, expanded and enhanced through collective efforts of many.

The following list of initiatives and accomplishments is a snapshot of highlights in alignment with CDAS recommendations and actions. Work will continue to grow and evolve.

Strategy Coordination

Over the past several months, a Strategy Coordinator has engaged with organizations, community partners and people with lived experience to support progress on recommendations including policy and advocacy opportunities, substance related services and campaigns, equity considerations, addressing system barriers such as stigma, and planning for community and agency forums (unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19).

The Implementation Steering Committee has provided leadership and support, and includes representation from:

- Addiction Services of Thames Valley
- Canadian Mental Health Association - Middlesex
- City of London
- London InterCommunity Health Centre
- London Police Service
- Middlesex-London Health Unit
- Regional HIV/AIDS Connection

Overarching

- During London's 1st Housing Stability Week initiative, over 800 people experiencing homelessness presented at Silverwoods Arena over the week. People were rapidly assessed and assisted to navigate housing and support services. Over 362 unique individuals completed assessments during Housing Stability Week and 118 people secured short/medium/long-term housing, including 84 adults and 34 children.
- *Youth Opportunities Unlimited* announced construction of a Housing First Youth Shelter with 16-24 emergency shelter beds and diversion services.
- CDAS submitted input to the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy consultation.
- *Addiction Services of Thames Valley (ADSTV)* It's Possible Campaign continued to expand, focusing on stigma reduction and support.
- *City of London Core Area Action Plan* was passed by *City Council* in 2019.

Prevention

- *Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU)* hosted "Substance Use and the Workplace... What You Need to Know!" forum in 2019, supporting workplaces with issues related to cannabis legalization.
- Responding to the legalization of cannabis, *Public Health*, with *London District Catholic School Board*, *Thames Valley District School Board*, and other partners, developed and delivered a series of educational events and resources for teachers and students.
- YouNeedToKnow.ca cannabis awareness campaign on cannabis law, potential harms and harm reduction was launched by *MLHU*.
- *London's Child and Youth Network* continued to impact positive family and child outcomes through Family Centres; these neighbourhood spaces offer families a full range of services onsite and connections to community services to help them be successful in all aspects of life.

Treatment

- *London Middlesex Addiction and Mental Health Network* provided opportunities for agencies to share resources, information and work together.
- In 2019, *London Health Sciences Centre* created the Bridging Program – Ambulatory Response Team to strengthen linkages and supports in the transition from inpatient services and ER to outpatient/community. This program has been successful in improving health outcomes for those living with mental health and substance use concerns.
- CDAS Treatment subcommittee was initiated, focused on increasing public awareness of treatment services and increasing community knowledge of substance use, harm reduction, addiction and stigma.
- In December 2019, the *Salvation Army Centre of Hope* opened the Recovery Community Centre (RCC) as a new holistic approach available to anyone in the community primarily seeking recovery from substance

Moving Forward

The impact of COVID-19 has exposed, more than ever, the needs of the community and the imperative to shift priorities and be nimble at both system and organizational levels. While the COVID-19 pandemic has required a pause in some actions, going forward, the *Middlesex-London Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy* will continue to work collaboratively to address substance use harms, while maintaining focus on long-term prevention.

Website

The full *Middlesex-London Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy* report can be found at: www.mldncdas.com.

use. The RCC includes recovery activities, peer support, formal services and recovery living.

- Addiction treatment agencies have adapted their treatment and support provisions in accordance with COVID-19 prevention protocols by implementing virtual outreach, counselling and treatment including through phone and internet. *ADSTV* launched virtual supportive information sessions on YouTube for people with concerns about their substance use, families, and community partners for use with their own clients and caregivers/families.
- *Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Middlesex*, on behalf of *CDAS*, successfully obtained 3-year funding through the London Community Grants Program for a project to lay the groundwork for a coordinated service response for crystal methamphetamine. This project will involve collaborative community assessment, identification of best practices, training and capacity building to improve supports and service options for those using crystal methamphetamine, thereby improving health and community wellbeing.

Harm Reduction

- In April 2019 the Temporary Overdose Prevention Site (TOPS) transitioned to a permanent Consumption and Treatment Service under the name Carepoint. Delivered by *Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (RHAC)* in partnership with *London InterCommunity Health Centre (LIHC)* with continued support from *MLHU*, the program operates 12 hours a day, 365 days per year.
- Middlesex-London maintains one of the highest distributions of naloxone in the province with 5,289 naloxone kits distributed in 2019 and 690 documented reversals. Over 30 community organizations including shelters, withdrawal management programs, AIDS service organizations, outreach programs, Indigenous communities, hospitals, pharmacies, police and fire administer/distribute naloxone, including initiating virtual training and curbside pickup during COVID-19.
- Rapid Access Addiction Medicine Clinic was started for 3 counties by *ADSTV* and *CMHA Middlesex*.
- *LIHC* initiated a study that provides safe supply of hydromorphone to high risk injection drug consuming clients.

Enforcement

- Initiated in 2017 by *London Police Service*, the London Connectivity Table continues to provide wrap around services for people at acute risk of complications related to mental health, substance use and criminal activity and “falling through the cracks”. Multiple agencies contribute to the planning and provision of services to provide individuals with appropriate support.
- The FOCO (“fake homecoming”) 2019 collaboration between *City of London*, *Western University*, *London Police Service* led to a decrease in serious injury and property destruction through collaborative policy, communication and enforcement.