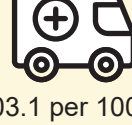
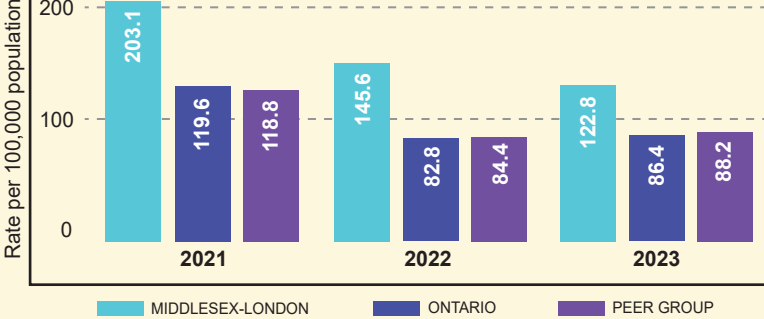


SUBSTANCE USE IN MIDDLESEX-LONDON: HOW WE COMPARE TO OUR PEER GROUP AND ONTARIO

And where we should focus our gaze as leaders committed to community well-being.

Opioids Continue to Cause Health Harms

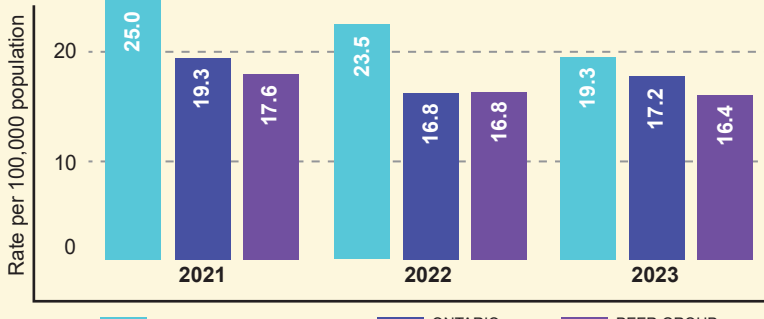
Like other jurisdictions, Middlesex-London is grappling with a significant crisis driven by the misuse of opioids. These substances have led to an alarming rate of emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths.



Since peaking at 203.1 per 100,000 population in 2021, the local rate of ED visits was significantly lower in both 2022 and 2023, but was still higher than Ontario and our Peer Group.



While the rate of hospitalizations for opioid poisonings was significantly higher in Middlesex-London than Ontario and the Peer Group in 2021, when it peaked at 25.4 per 100,000 population, since then, local rates have been comparable to Ontario and our Peers.



The death rate for opioid poisonings was significantly higher in Middlesex-London than Ontario and the Peer Group in 2021 and 2022, but was once again comparable in 2023.

Who has the highest rate of opioid poisonings leading to ED visits and deaths?

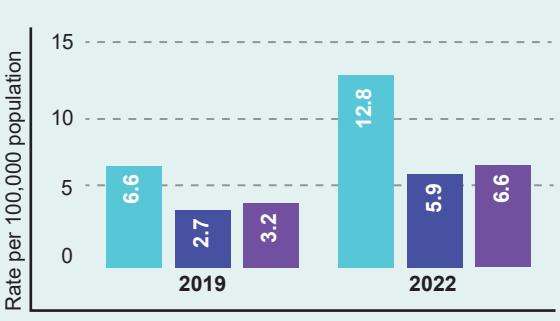
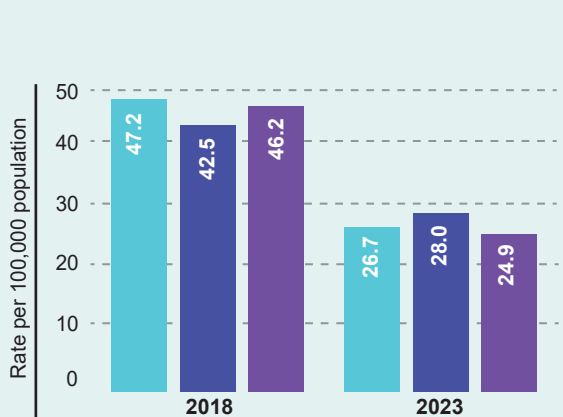
25-44 YRS



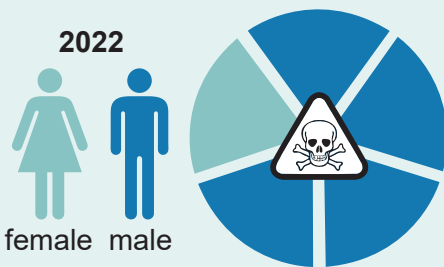
Methamphetamine Deaths Disproportionately Impacting Middlesex and London

While communities across the province also face concerning rates of opioid and methamphetamine use in recent years, the rate of deaths from methamphetamine poisonings has been higher in Middlesex-London than Ontario and our Peer Group since 2019.

In 2023, the rate of emergency department visits for methamphetamine poisonings in Middlesex-London was comparable to Ontario and the Peer Group. The local rate of 26.7 methamphetamine ED visits per 100,000 population was significantly lower compared to the rate from five years before (2018) and has been showing signs of decline in recent years.



However, the death rate for methamphetamine poisonings were significantly higher in Middlesex-London than Ontario and our Peer Group since 2019. In 2022, the local death rate due to methamphetamine poisoning was 12.8 deaths per 100,000 population.



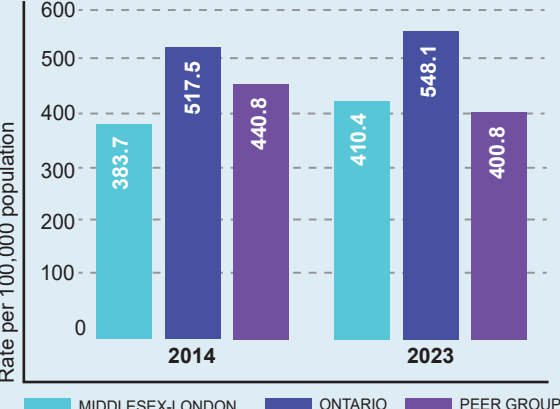
Who experiences more fatal methamphetamine deaths? In 2022 the rate was more than four times higher among males than females at 23.8 deaths per 100,000 people.



Rates of deaths from methamphetamine poisonings in Middlesex-London from 2019 to 2022 were more than double compared to Ontario.

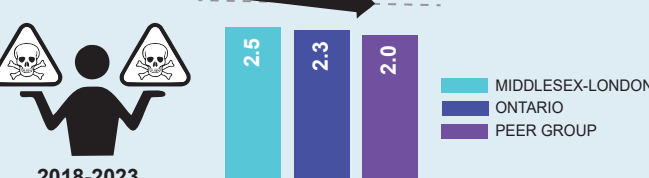
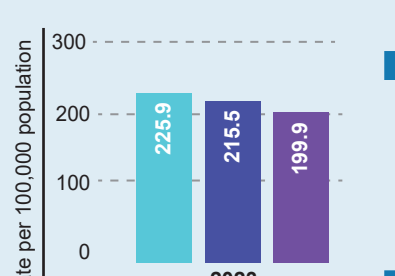
Alcohol Use Contributes to Both Negative Health Consequences and Health System Burden

Contributing to the negative health impact of our misuse of opioids and methamphetamine, is our use of alcohol. The local rate of emergency department visits caused by alcohol exceeds those for opioid or methamphetamine use, and our region faces a higher rate of hospitalizations related to alcohol compared to Ontario and our Peer Group.



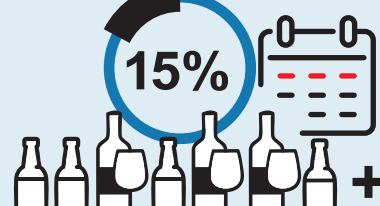
Local ED visit rates for alcohol far exceed those for opioids or methamphetamines, and there were more than 2,000 associated ED visits among Middlesex-London residents in 2023.

The rate of hospitalizations for conditions entirely caused by alcohol was significantly higher in Middlesex-London compared to Ontario and our Peer Group from 2015 to 2022, and significantly higher than our Peer Group in 2023.



The rate of deaths for conditions entirely caused by alcohol in Middlesex-London was comparable to Ontario and our Peer Group from 2018 to 2023.

In 2019/2020, 15% of Middlesex-London adults 19+ self-reported consuming 7 or more drinks per week, putting them at increasingly high risk for negative health consequences.



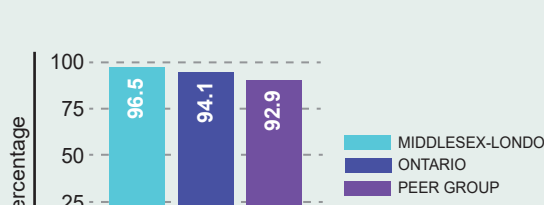
About 2 in 10 Adults Still Smoke Commercial Tobacco

Daily commercial tobacco use and current smoker status rates among individuals 19+ have remained relatively stable for the region served by the Middlesex-London Health Unit, as they have across our Peer Group and Ontario.



In Middlesex-London, approximately 12% of adults reported daily smoking in 2019/2020, which is comparable to Ontario and the Peer Group.

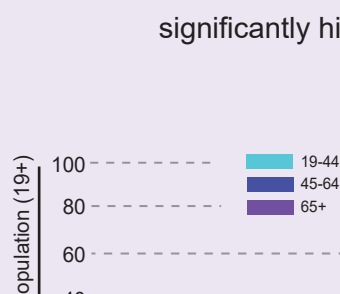
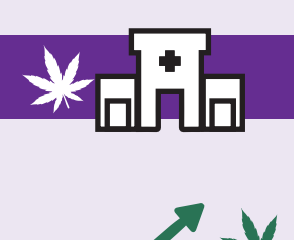
Most youth 12-18 in Middlesex-London, as well as Ontario and our Peer Group, self-reported having never smoked commercial tobacco products.



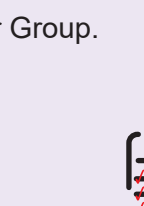
Where have you experienced second hand smoke exposure?

Our Cannabis Use Is Sending Us to Hospital

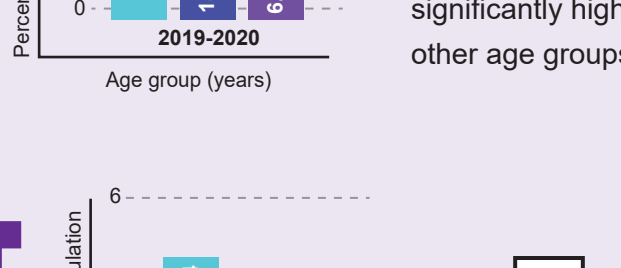
In 2022, hospitalizations due to cannabis poisoning were significantly higher here than in Ontario or our Peer Group.



About 37% of 19-44 year olds in Middlesex-London self-reported cannabis use in the past 12 months, which was significantly higher than other age groups.

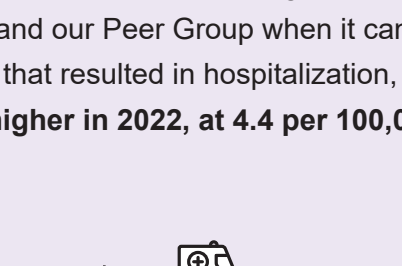


In 2019-2020, 31% of adults 19+ self reported daily cannabis use.



From 2013 to 2021, the Middlesex-London region was comparable to Ontario and our Peer Group when it came to cannabis poisonings that resulted in hospitalization, but was significantly higher in 2022, at 4.4 per 100,000 population.

In 2022, the rate of ED visits among children 12 and younger for cannabis-related poisonings was 17.8 per 100,000, and the hospitalization rate in this age group was 8.2 per 100,000.



Our Response:

The Middlesex-London Health Unit works with municipalities and community organizations on strategies to reduce substance related harms in our community. The Health Unit implements social marketing campaigns to increase knowledge and influence behaviour, enforces Smoke-Free Ontario legislation, provides harm reduction education and clean equipment to people who use substances to reduce their risk of harms and distributes Naloxone to prevent opioid deaths.

Notes: PeerGroup = Durham Region Health Department, Halton Region Health Department, Hamilton Public Health Services, Middlesex-London Health Unit, Ottawa Public Health, Region of Waterloo Public Health, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

For more information about substance use in our region, visit our Substance Use Dashboard