

Canada's Opioid Crisis

Overview and federal actions

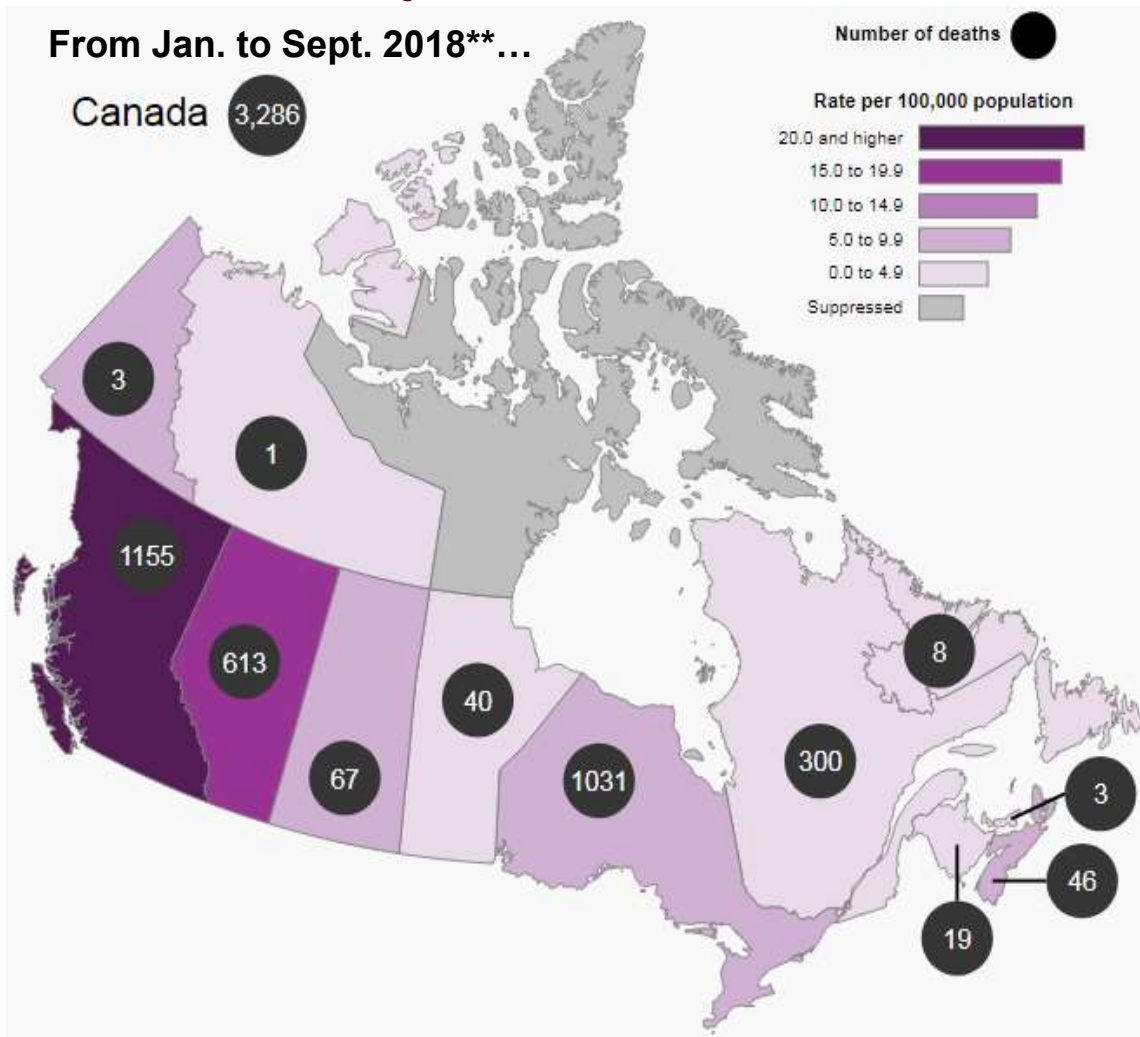
May 16, 2019

Simon Kennedy
Deputy Minister
Health Canada



The opioid crisis is one of the most serious public health crises in recent memory

From Jan. to Sept. 2018**...



10,300^{*, **} +

Opioid-related deaths from Jan. 2016 to Sept. 2018

Compared to...

SARS
2002-2003

44

H1N1
2009-2010

428

HIV/AIDS
1987-1999

13,255

** Data from British Columbia and available data from Quebec for 2017 (July to December) and 2018 include deaths related to all illegal drugs including, but not limited to, opioids.

As the crisis continues, its complexity is emerging

Contamination of
the illegal drug
supply

- Approximately **three quarters** of accidental apparent opioid-related overdose deaths involved **fentanyl or analogues**

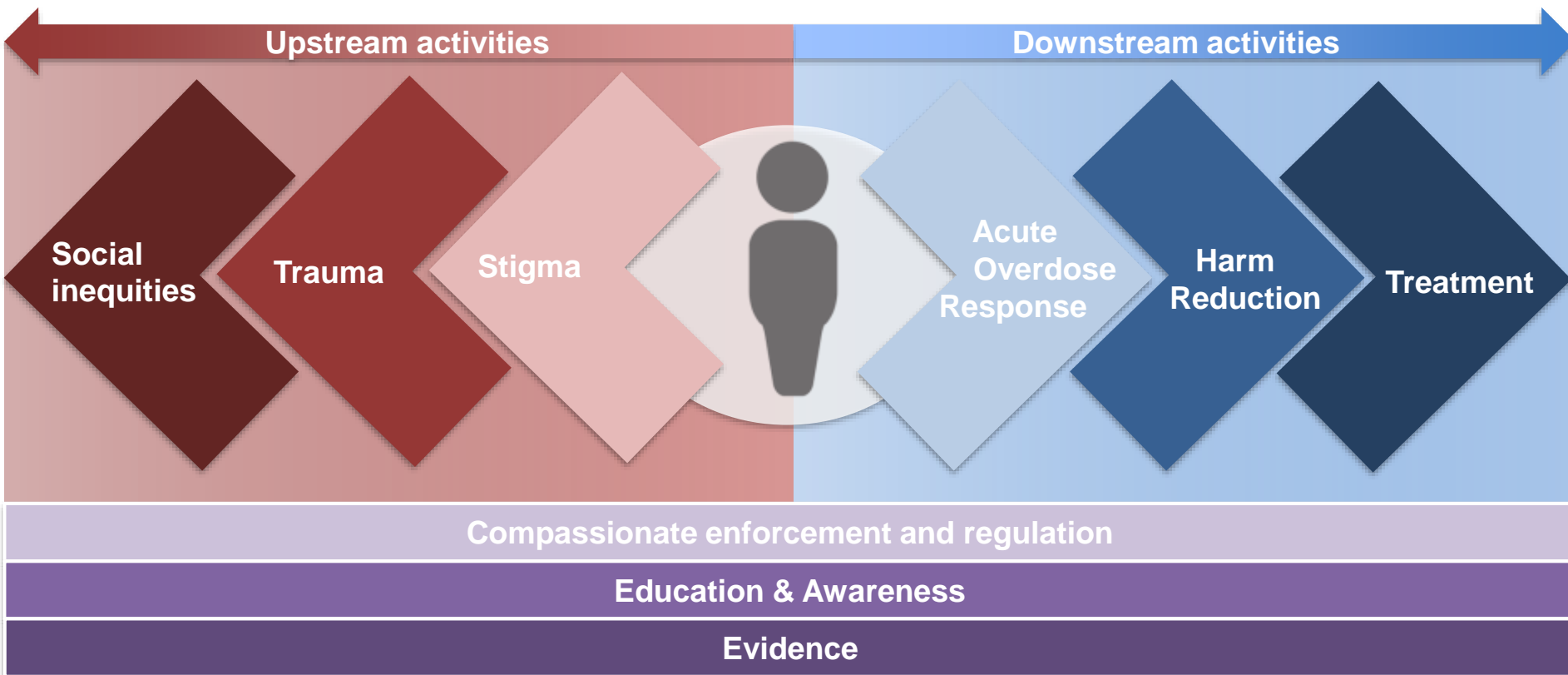
Poly-substance
use

- **76%** of accidental apparent-opioid overdose deaths from Jan 2016 to June 2018 involved **one or more types of non-opioid substances**
- Use of **non-opioid substances** (e.g., methamphetamine) is increasingly common at **Supervised Consumption Sites**

Use of drugs
alone and in
private
residences

- A national epidemiology study from the Public Health Agency of Canada observed that those who fatally overdosed were **frequently alone**
- Data from BC show that **62%** of fatal overdoses occurred in **private residences**

Federal Approach to Canada's Opioid Crisis





Stigma is a barrier to accessing services, health care and treatment for people who use drugs

- Canada's international efforts in this area include:
 - Leading the development of UN-CND resolution 61/11; adopted by consensus at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2018
 - UN-Office on Drugs and Crime partnership to host an expert working group meeting, to develop recommendations for best practices
 - Fully engaging and leveraging insights from people with lived and living experience with drug use
- Canada's domestic efforts in this area include:
 - Launching national awareness and public education campaigns
 - Training for law enforcement officers
 - Working with health professionals to reduce barriers caused by stigma

Increasing access to HARM REDUCTION



1. Approved 40 **supervised consumption sites** and enabled establishment of **temporary overdose prevention sites**
 - Canada is a leader in SCS/OPS access...
 - Authorized drug checking technologies at these sites
2. Making **naloxone** more widely available without a prescription and promoting its availability:
 - Included with standard First Aid Training
 - Broad access & distribution free of charge
 - Providing take home naloxone kits for inmates being released
3. Exploring interventions to provide a **Safe Supply**
 - A safer supply of predictable, prescribed opioids can reduce the dependence of people who use drugs on a contaminated drug supply
 - We have invested in two pilot projects and have committed funds for more projects
 - An expert implementation team is drafting guidance for service providers to integrate safer opioid supply into their clinical offerings

Increasing access to TREATMENT



- Improved access to treatment services through an Emergency Treatment Fund for provinces and territories
- Supporting the development of a national treatment guideline for injectable opioid agonist treatment
- Facilitated methadone prescribing and the use of medical heroin to fully support low barrier treatment, including nurse-led models of care
- Recently approved an indication for injectable hydromorphone for the treatment of substance use disorder
- Allowed the import of medications, not yet authorized in Canada, for urgent public health needs



All of these interventions are based on EVIDENCE



- The Canadian Drug and Substances Strategy is grounded in evidence
- Canada is pleased to support the methodology and findings from this inaugural OECD Report on the opioid crisis
 - The Report confirms and aligns with our comprehensive approach
- This Report is a good example of how international organizations can facilitate the translation of evidence into policies and practice
- Canada looks forward to collaborating on future OECD initiatives

More information

Canada.ca/opioids

Find information about:



Opioids

Opioids relieve pain. Used properly they can often help. But problematic use can cause dependence, overdose and death.



Opioid overdose

Overdose risks and signs: how to respond.



Naloxone

Where to get a naloxone kit.



Supervised consumption sites

Find requirements, guidance, locations.



Stigma

Defining stigma and why it matters.



Government response

Our comprehensive, collaborative, compassionate and evidence-based response.

hc.opioidresponse-interventionopioides.sc@canada.ca