

Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy

Working collaboratively towards a life free from the impact of substance use for all residents in the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington.



The Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy Committee (WGDC) is a cross-sectoral coalition, based on the four-pillars model, which recognizes that no one sector can respond to the issue of substance misuse in isolation. By focusing on all pillars, including **Prevention**, **Treatment**, **Harm Reduction** and **Enforcement** in tandem, we endeavor to work with the problem of substance misuse across the entire continuum of needs.

Our Committee consists of 25 community agencies and partners as well as representatives of the lived experience community. The Strategy itself was finalized in 2009, and was built on the foundation of a broad needs assessment that was completed. We are currently well-rooted in our Implementation Phase. The purpose of this Newsletter is to share with you of the many things we have accomplished together, as a community of dedicated, insightful and caring individuals. It is our intention to provide a publication such as this on a semi-annual basis, keeping you informed of both our celebrated successes as well as our lessons learned.

Message from the Chair

The last year has marked some significant changes and accomplishments of the WGDC. The Strategy's founding member Valerie Sauer retired from her post as Assistance Administrator at Ontario Works. Valerie's original vision and dedication over the years saw the Drug Strategy grow from a thought into a powerful initiative that has resulted in community change. Lindsay Klassen joined the Drug Strategy to cover Raechelle Devereaux's maternity leave. Lindsay stepped in quite seamlessly and moved many of our key initiatives forward, building new partnerships and program outcomes. Congratulations to Raechelle on the birth of her beautiful baby boy, Matthew. We were pleased to have her rejoin the Strategy in March.

The Strengthening Families grant took the WGDC in a new direction, overseeing the delivery of effective prevention programming in the City of Guelph and rural Wellington County. Partnerships with the WWLHIN and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario expanded our interaction with physicians in the community, enabling us to move closer to our goals. It is very impressive to see the number of people from such a broad range of agencies participate in the WGDC and working groups. The commitment and energy has truly resulted in profound change for the County of Wellington and the City of Guelph.

Heather Kerr, Chair, WGDC/ Executive Director, Stonehenge Therapeutic Community

Prevention

Neighbourhood Watch Partnership

Throughout 2010, the WGDSC supported Neighbourhood Watch in their development of a youth drug prevention event. The initiative, which took place in October 2010, brought 250 students together to hear a presentation by Rick Osborne as well as presentations by local youth addiction service providers and youth with lived experience. An evening presentation for parents also took place. In their evaluations of the event, 90% of the students indicated that the event would impact their thoughts on substance use in the future.

Education & Prevention Working Group

Christy Colb, Portage

Jessica St-Peter, Women in Crisis

Susan Gray, OPP

Garry Male, Guelph Police Service

John Wenstrup, CADS

Tracy Hunter, Upper Grand District School Board

Christy Cunningham, Wellington Catholic District School Board

Pat Allan, CAMH

Strengthening Families for the Future

The WGDSC quickly recognized the need for increased access to evidence-based prevention efforts as an integral part of the overall strategy. In response to this need, and in accordance with the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse's best practices in youth prevention, an inventory of existing prevention programs was completed, with a focus on their research-based effectiveness. Through this process, the rigorously-evaluated program Strengthening Families for the Future (SFF) was recognized as a best practice in youth prevention. With this awareness, a concentrated effort was made to expand and increasing accessibility to this family-based prevention program in our community.

Implementation began with a partnering process, whereby 12 community organizations were brought together. Simultaneously, two Proceeds of Crime grants were successfully obtained through effective relationships with our local enforcement partners, Guelph Police Services and Wellington

County OPP. Acting as project manager, the WGDSC has now supported the roll out of three SFF programs in rural Wellington County communities and two in the City of Guelph since September 2010. Additionally, funding was also obtained to support the research-based program Families and Schools Together (FAST). As a result of these efforts, 49 families have participated in the SFF program, including 67 children, as well as three additional FAST programs.

Efforts to ensure sustainability are underway, focusing on opportunities for new funding, and more importantly, on the foundational partnerships to support the continuation of this program in our community.

Partners include:

- Family and Children's
- County of Wellington Ontario Works
- Trellis
- WDG Public Health
- Women in Crisis
- Stonehenge Therapeutic Community
- Upper Grand Family Health Team
- Mount Forest Family Health Team
- Fergus Community Resource Centre
- Guelph CHC
- Guelph Police Services
- Wellington County OPP



Residential Treatment, Local Residents

The WGDSC completed a research-based report identifying the need for increased services for individuals waiting for residential treatment, with recommendations including: the development of Intensive Case Management for local individuals waiting for both local and provincially-based residential addiction treatment services; increased residential treatment beds at local addiction treatment centres and increased capacity to manage concurrent disorders within local residential addiction treatment centres. The WGDSC partnered with the Addiction Services Group to coordinate a collaborative partnership between Stonehenge Therapeutic Community, Homewood Health Centre, St. Mary's Counseling

and House of Friendship. A funding application has subsequently been submitted to support the implementation of Intensive Case Management for individuals with addictions. **F u n d e d**, this initiative would be history-making, as it would be the first provincial addiction-specific case management program in the province.

Treatment Working Group

Heather Kerr, Stonehenge

John Wenstrup, CADS

Janice Lacey, Homewood Health Centre

Lisa Bigam, Trellis

Patrick Culver, Portage

Pam Gardiner, House of Friendship

Pat Allan, CAMH

Outreach

The Outreach Working Group synthesized data that was collected from interviews with 17 outreach workers in our community, and formulated a series of recommendations, focusing on enhanced service coordination and service accessibility.

The recommendations made through this exercise were brought forward to a Steering Committee table (agency

Accessibility and Coordination of Outreach Services

decision-makers), where there was enthusiasm to consider the recommendations. They are now being brought forward to the Support Coordination table of the Addiction and Mental Health Network, which encompasses the Waterloo Wellington Region. It is anticipated that the hard work of this group will help to inform the coordination of support services across the broader system.

Treatment

Marginalized Youth

In July 2009, a funding application was made to Health Canada to support the implementation of a youth prevention outreach worker targeting marginalized youth disconnected from mainstream supports. This application was unsuccessful, due in part to significant over-subscription to the funding basket. However, the youth consultations that were completed to inform the developed program model have been shared with many partners to inform their practices with youth. Additionally, given both the need and readiness for this initiative to move forward, continued review of potential funding opportunities continues to take place.

Partners include:

- Family and Children's Services
- Wyndham House
- Second Chance Employment and
- Give Yourself Credit.

Outreach Working Group

Natalie Basaraba, ACG

Steve Jones, CMHA

Keith McKenna, Trellis

Lisa Bigam, Trellis

Tanya Saunders, Guelph CHC

Frances Livingston, CRC

Pat Allan, CAMH

Medical

Medical Working Group

Don McDermott, Pharmacist
Tracy Hobson, WDG Public Health
Suzanne Trivers, Mount Forest FHT
Pat Allan, CAMH
Sean Winger, Consumer Advocate

Consultant Members

Dr. Nathan Frank
Dr. Don Pinksen
Dr. Jen Braun
Dr. Melanie Bluhm
Dr. Stella Pasion
Dr. Steve Reinhart
Guelph FHT

Harm Reduction

The Harm Reduction Working Group has produced two significant print materials, the first being a Blue Addiction Services wallet card, outlining the addiction services in Guelph-Wellington. Secondly, the group produced a Harm Reduction Myths and Facts brochure, in an effort to both demystify and destigmatize harm reduction principles and services.

Reducing Opiate Misuse in Our Community



In January 2010, a mail out to 265 physicians in Guelph and Wellington County was completed, offering them a breadth of information regarding local resources, as well as literature speaking to effective prescribing practices.

In September 2010, a physician's dinner was held in partnership with Perdu Pharma, with goals of continuing dialogue regarding opiate misuse, to provide a learning opportunity for physicians related to issues with prescribing opiates, as well as to increase awareness regarding local resources. The keynote speaker, Dr. Roman Jovey,

shared his insights on prescribing to vulnerable populations.

In April 2011, in partnership with the Addiction and Mental Health Network, with funding provided by the WWLHIN, the WGDSC provided primary care providers and allied health professionals with a virtual keynote address provided by Dr. Nick Kates. In his presentation, Dr. Kates speaks about the paramount role that primary care providers play in responding to the needs of individuals with mental health and addiction issues.

In late April 2011, the WGDSC, in partnership with Region of Waterloo Public Health, hosted the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario's interactive training workshop, "Canadian Guidelines for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids," which was attended by close to 100 physicians and pharmacists from Waterloo-Wellington.

The Harm Reduction Working Group has also hosted two successful Harm Reduction Community Forums, which have been very well attended. The most recent Forum occurred in March 2011, and included a keynote address by Dr. Carol Strike of CAMH, breakout sessions on Methadone Maintenance, Housing and Seniors, as well as a Lived Experience Panel presentation.

Harm Reduction Working Group

Tom Hammond, ACG
Roselyn LaRochelle, WDG Public Health
Adam Rutherford, City of Guelph
Michael Matte, Person with Lived Experience
Katie Stewart, Guelph YMCA
Jennifer Cochrane, John Howard Society
Pat Allan, CAMH

Provide Transitional Housing for Individuals Struggling with Addictions

The WGDSC completed a position paper identifying the Housing First model as a best practice in the provision of housing to those experiencing persistent homelessness. A model for transitional housing in Guelph-Wellington was then developed, based on consultations with transitional housing providers across South-Western Ontario, individuals with lived experience, and with the service provider community.

Two proponents for the transitional housing program were identified: Stonehenge Therapeutic Community and Canadian Mental Health Association. An in-reach based service model for tenants was then developed, obtaining commitment from key agency partners.

The model was presented to City Council, obtaining endorsement to pursue a City-owned property as the site.

An application for capital funding was sought through the Federal-Provincial Affordable Housing Program to develop the proposed

16-unit project.

The funding application was unsuccessful, however continued attention is given to viable capital and operating funding opportunities.

Through funding made available by the Wellington Waterloo LHIN, 32 Addiction Supportive Housing units are rolling out across Waterloo Wellington. 16 of these units have been dedicated to Guelph-Wellington. These beds will be made available to individuals who have completed treatment or who are treatment-involved, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and are high users of our local health care services. This program is responsive to community need, and is the first time that housing funding has been directed at the addiction sector. The model compliments the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy's Housing First focus, where homeless individuals may not have engaged in treatment goals.



Housing

Housing First

A recent innovation in social policy regarding treatment of the homeless. Rather than moving homeless individuals through different "levels" of housing, known as the Continuum of Care, whereby each level moves them closer to "independent housing," Housing First moves the homeless immediately from the streets or homeless shelters into their own apartments.

Housing First approaches are based on the concept that the first and primary need is to obtain stable housing, and that other issues that may affect the household can and should be addressed once housing is obtained.

- Wikipedia

Housing Working Group

Diane Laur, Wellington County Housing Services

Tanya Saunders, Guelph CHC

Heather Kerr, Stonehenge Therapeutic Community

Don Roth, CMHA

Pat Allan, CAMH

Strategic Planning

Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy 2011/2012 Priorities

- Developing a Cohesive Community-Based Prevention Framework
- Sustaining Evidence-Based Prevention Programs
- Youth Treatment Research Project - Evidence-Informed Practice
- Improving Primary Health Care Options for Individuals with Addiction Issues
- Harm Reduction Forum 2012

On June 6, 2011, the Committee met to complete our annual strategic plan, revitalizing our Mission, Vision, Goal and Values, as well as setting our priorities for the 2011/2012 year. The meeting was a vibrant mix of our many partners, who contributed greatly to the process.

Mission:

We are committed to the ongoing development and implementation of a community-based, funded drug strategy that will improve the quality of life for residents of the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington.

Vision:

A life free of harm from substance use for all residents of the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington

Goal:

Through community partnership, we endeavour to incorporate the four pillars: Prevention, Enforcement, Treatment and Harm Reduction, to balance the needs of all community members regarding issues of substance use.

Value Statements:

- We value collaboration through both partnership and participation. The meaningful engagement of our members and our community is integral to our success.
- We work with a client-centred focus. We value the voices of individuals with lived experience, recognizing how important their input is in our work.
- Open communication, trust and transparency are essential to each of our processes.
- We value a knowledge-base in all of our work, whereby best-practices, applied research and evaluation will contribute to the effectiveness of our projects and overall strategy.
- We will continually demonstrate our accountability, showing both to our funders and to the community that we are committed to building a healthier Guelph and Wellington County.

For More Information Please contact:

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