



Blueprint for Action:

Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy (WGDS) Strategic Plan 2017 - 2022



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Introduction and History

Introduction

The WGDS Partner Organizations worked throughout 2017 to design a Blueprint for Action: The WGDS Strategic Plan 2017-2022. The Strategic Plan process was led by Sarah Haanstra, manager of Toward Common Ground. These contributions of skill, creativity, experience, and time are gratefully acknowledged.

History

The WGDS has gratefully received funding from the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington since 2008. It is proud to be able to champion local responses to complex substance related issues. While keeping the interests of local residents and the resources of local services at the centre of its work, the creative and effective work of the WGDS also resonates at a provincial and national level.

In 2016, on the occasion of the 10-year anniversary of the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy (WGDS), the WGDS Management Group* prioritized updating the WGDS strategic planning process. Since the last strategic review in 2011, changes had occurred within the WGDS's work processes which need to be accurately summarized, and the WGDS required a process to determine its strategic direction for the next 5 years.

Throughout 2017, WGDS Committee members* met on 3 occasions and developed the elements of the strategic plan presented in this document.

Prior to the 2017 strategic planning process, the WGDS's work had been guided as follows:

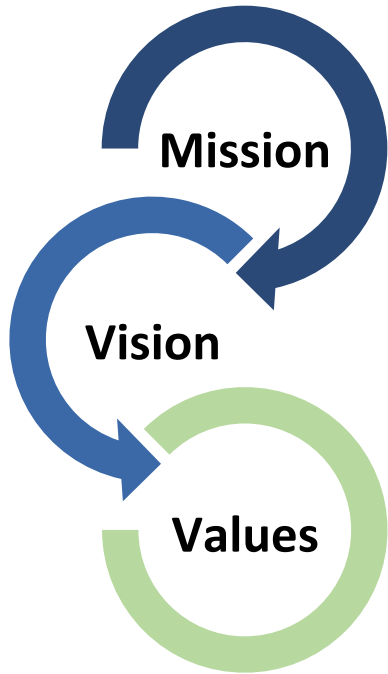
- In 2008, the WGDS's Strategy Committee released a report called "*Environmental Scan – Needs Assessment Report*" which identified the issues, problems, gaps and needs related to drug and alcohol use in Guelph and Wellington County in eight key areas, namely: Housing, Medical Care, Treatment, Education/Prevention, Outreach, Harm Reduction, Enforcement/Justice and Systems.
- In 2008, Between June-September, eight sub-committees developed strategies/activities for each of the 8 identified areas of need.
- By December 2008, these strategies/activities had been reviewed, edited and finalized by WGDS partner organizations, and they were endorsed by both Wellington County Council and Guelph City Council.

- In 2011, a revised WGDS Strategy Report was released which presented 31 actionable goals, ranging from expanding outreach services to reducing prescription drug misuse, to guide WGDS partner organizations in their work to improve services for residents of Guelph-Wellington who struggle with substance-related issues.
- From 2011-2016, WGDS partner organizations took action on all 31 of the potential opportunities identified in the 2011 Revised WGDS Report. This is a testimony to the value of the initial planning process and to the focused work of WGDS Working Groups. The WGDS was directly responsible for some of the positive outcomes achieved, as in the leadership role that the WGDS took in creating a local Drug Treatment Court. Other activities were led by partner organizations, but the seed of the new programming or new educational initiative lay in the collective work that that had been undertaken with all the community stakeholders.
- With the creation of this current WGDS Strategic Plan document, the WGDS is now positioned to continue to both lead and support community organizations in moving Guelph-Wellington towards the WGDS vision of a community free from harms related to substance use, and its mission of taking action to prevent and respond to local substance use and addiction issues.

**Please see Page 5 and 6 of this report to learn more about these aspects of the WGDS.*



What WGDS Aims For



Mission

We take action to prevent and respond to local substance use and addiction issues.

Vision

We envision communities in Guelph-Wellington free from harm related to substance use.

Values

1. Collaboration
2. Client-centered
3. Open and transparent communication
4. Evidence-based action

WGDS Values

1. Collaboration

- We value and draw on the strengths of our community partners
- We value diversity, knowledge and the focused action that results from collaborative partnerships

2. Client-centred

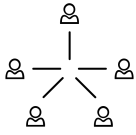
- We value the voices of individuals with lived experience
- We value innovative interventions that put the client's needs first

3. Open and transparent communication

- We value conversations that are honest, inclusive and productive

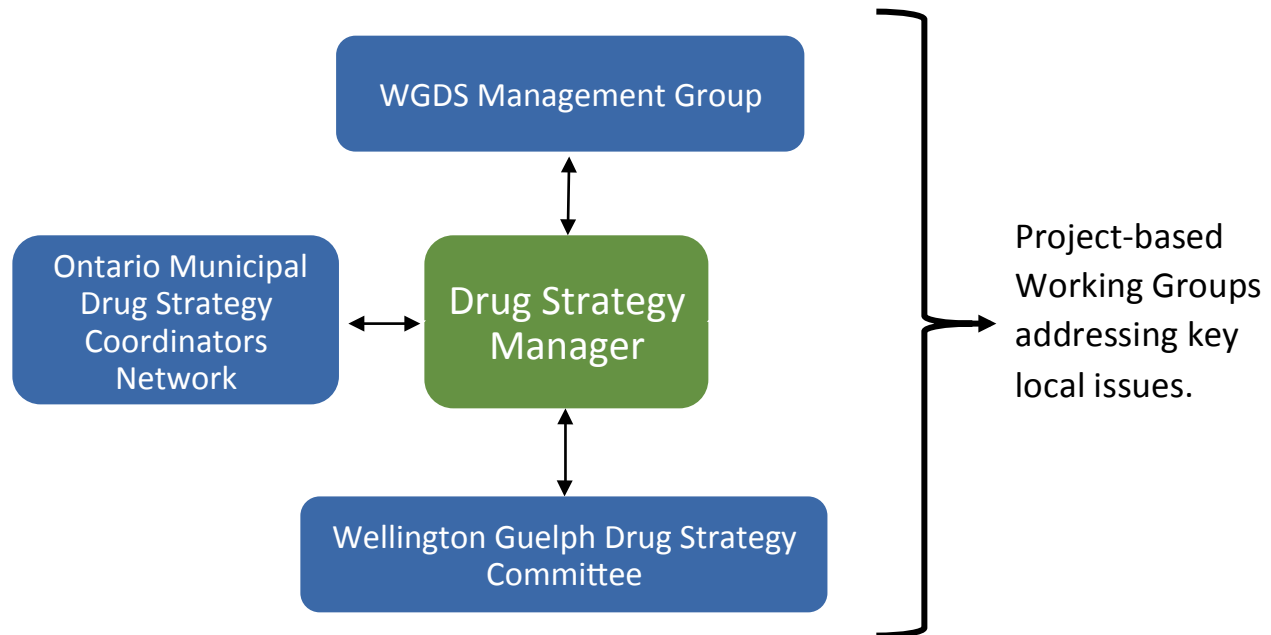
4. Evidence-based action

- We value taking action based on what we know from: people with lived experience, service providers, work in other communities, best-practices, applied and academic research and evaluation processes



Organizational Framework

Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy Structure:



Roles/Functions:

WGDS Management Group

- Supports the operation of the WGDS in accordance to terms outlined in the Community Funding agreements between the WGDS, City of Guelph, and the County of Wellington, and in accordance to the terms of the Host Agency Agreement between the WGDS and the Guelph Community Health Centre (GCHC)
- Has representation at a Senior/Strategic level from: Funders (City of Guelph and County of Wellington), GCHC host agency, each of the Four Pillars of the Drug Strategy and the WGDS Chair. Members may have dual roles, so the maximum size of the Management Group is 8, and the minimum size is 4.
- Guides the strategic direction of the WGDS Working Groups and approves the annual WGDS workplan
- Responsible for hiring, monitoring and overseeing the work of the WGDS Manager
- Meets every 2 months

WGDS Committee

- Members include all WGDS partner organizations
- Creates a forum in which
 - (1) current, local substance-related issues are identified
 - (2) community priorities are developed
 - (3) working group action plans are reviewed
 - (4) feedback/evaluation of WGDS projects occurs
 - (5) discussion, education, advocacy, program development and knowledge transfer takes place amongst WGDS partner organizations.
- Meets quarterly

WGDS Working Groups

- Time-limited working groups are the primary means by which the WGDS accomplishes its workplan
- Each priority project is supported by a working group with representation from the Four Pillars, and other expertise as-needed
- Each working group is governed by a Terms of Reference that outlines membership, project objectives, expected duration of the project, member expectations, etc.
- Once a project's goals are accomplished, each working group disbands

Drug Strategy Manager

- WGDS Manager oversees Working Group processes
- Follows the direction provided by the WGDS Management Group
- Works with volunteers, students, and administration support to execute key strategic directions
- Keeps informed about substance use/addiction issues relevant to the local community
- Participates in the Municipal Drug Strategies Coordinators Network of Ontario
- Position is hosted at the GCHC



WGDS Model: The Four Pillars

WGDS projects are typically cross-sector and multi-service in scope. The WGDS initiates discussion and relationships amongst all community stakeholders which respond to, or are impacted by, substance use challenges. By bringing diverse perspectives to the table, the WGDS, like other Four Pillar Drug Strategies in Ontario, works to bring about positive change that is effective and sustainable. The Four Pillars of the WGDS are: Prevention, Harm Reduction, Treatment/Recovery, and Community Safety.



Prevention Pillar

The Prevention Pillar includes strategies and interventions that help to prevent the harmful use of substances. This includes:

- Reducing individual, family, neighbourhood and community harm from substance use by addressing risk factors and enhancing protective factors
- Delaying the onset of first substance use
- Reducing the incidence (rate of new cases over a period of time) and prevalence (number of current cases at one time in a population) of problematic substance use and substance dependence
- Providing education regarding substance issues, resiliency, and the social determinants of health

Examples of prevention include supporting the development of programs/curriculum to educate youth regarding the risks/benefits of substance use, offering family and individual mentorship programs that build resilience and protective factors, and engaging in the development of municipal policies regarding selling and accessing substances.

Harm Reduction Pillar

The Harm Reduction Pillar provides a health-centered approach to substance use. The principles of harm reduction require that no harm is done to those suffering from substance addiction, and that the focus is on the physical, emotional and relational harms caused by problematic substance use, rather than substance use itself. Customized harm reduction interventions can meet the needs of individuals, families, organizations, or society. This includes:

- Taking action to reduce the stigma associated with substance use and addiction
- Building relationships with substance consumers so that the voice of lived experience contributes to all WGDS projects
- Advocating for health equity in the delivery of addiction services
- Seeking opportunities to educate about, and advocate for, harm reduction approaches (clinical, policy-focused, legislative, etc.)

Examples of harm reduction include needle exchange programs, offering overdose prevention and safe consumption sites, educating prescribers about opioid substitution therapies, mobile clinics, outreach and education about naloxone kits so that they are available to anyone requesting one.

Treatment and Recovery Pillar

The Treatment and Recovery Pillar supports the development of services and programs to provide options along a continuum of care to support the differing needs of individuals experiencing substance-related issues. These services vary in duration and intensity, ranging from abstinence-based programs to managed use programs, depending on individual client goals. This includes:

- Providing trauma-informed models of care
- Advocating for supportive housing services for people with substance dependency
- Offering peer-based support services
- Building capacity within multiple sectors, including primary care and the justice system, for substance dependency treatment to be identified and offered in a timely and purposeful way

Examples of treatment and recovery include supporting the development of both community and residential withdrawal management (“detox”), and offering a variety of both inpatient and outpatient treatment services such as community-delivered addiction medicine services, counseling, self-help programs and so on, to meet a wide-range of client needs.

Community Safety Pillar

The Community Safety Pillar recognizes the need for peace, public order and safety. It works to reduce crime and community harms associated with substance use while protecting the vulnerable and preserving and protecting life. This pillar includes local police services as well as the broader criminal justice system of the courts, probation and parole, etc. This includes:

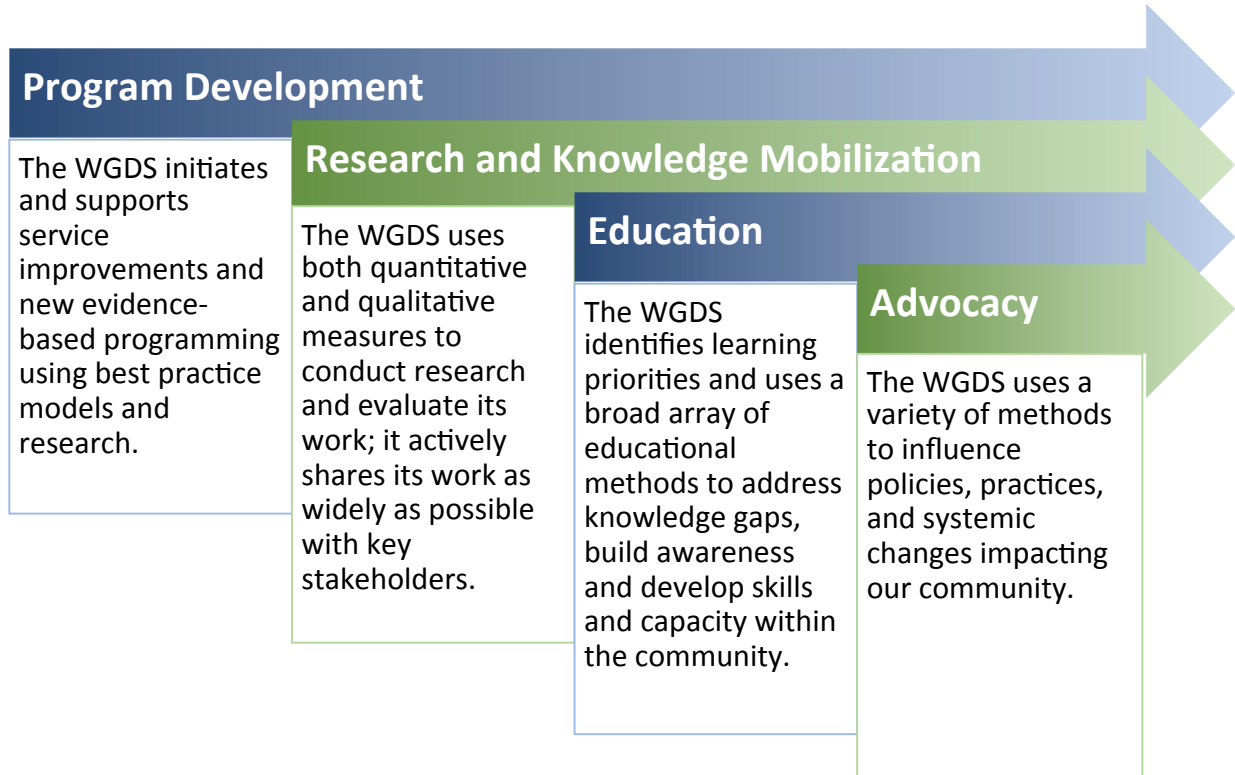
- Encouraging working partnerships between police, justice and social/health service providers to address shared challenges
- Supporting individuals whose addiction has resulted in criminal activities to find options that can lead to recovery
- Developing effective pathways to support community members with substance issues transition safely out of the justice system

Examples of the Community Safety Pillar include Drug Treatment Court, the IMPACT team, advocating for an increase in the supply of Harm Reduction Supportive Housing, and developing case management models to support clients who have been released from custody.



WGDS Approach: Four Pathways

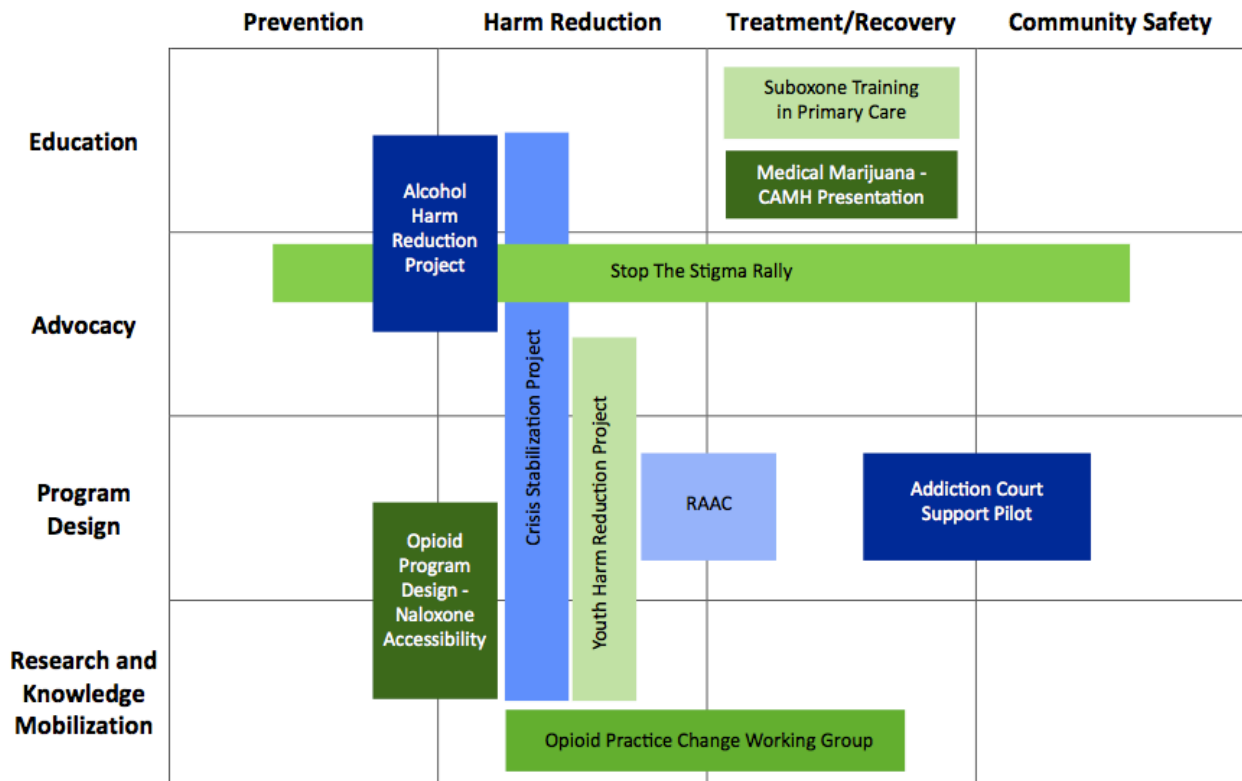
Pathways identify the key approaches that the WGDS uses to create change so that its vision and mission are accomplished.





Pillar/Pathway Matrix of Projects

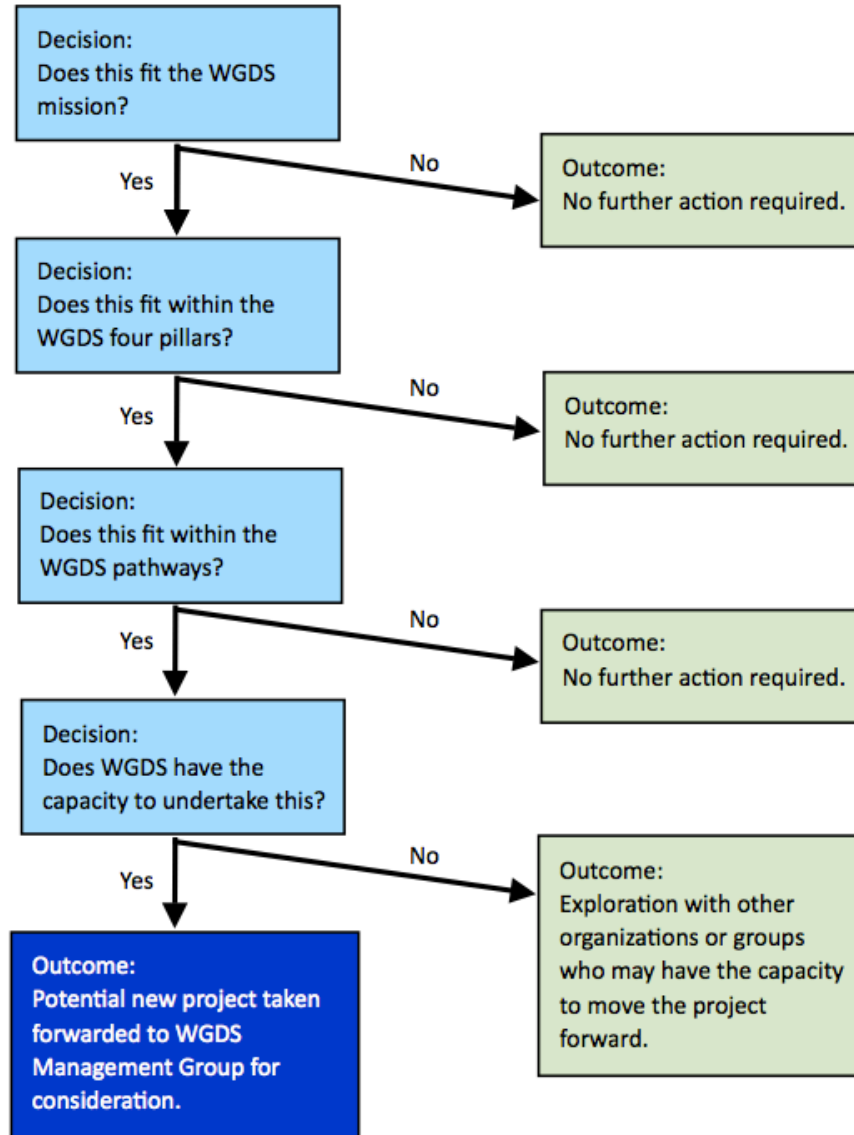
Four Pillar/Pathway Matrix of WGDS Projects – 2017





WGDS Decision Tree

The following decision tree guides the prioritization process when determining new projects.





WGDS Partner Organizations

Partners:

ARCH Guelph
Canadian Mental Health Association WWD
City of Guelph
Community Network of Specialized Care
Community Resource Centre of North and Centre Wellington
County of Wellington
Drop In Centre
Dunara Homes for Recovery
Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County
Family Counselling and Support Services
Guelph CHC
Guelph General Hospital
Guelph Family Health Team
Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition
Guelph Pharmacy Association
Guelph Police Services
Guelph and Wellington Task Force for the Elimination of Poverty
Guelph Wellington Women in Crisis
Homewood Health Centre
Mount Forest Family Health Team
Ontario Probation and Parole
Parent Action on Drugs (PAD)
Portage Ontario
Royal City Church
Safe Communities Wellington
Sanguen Health Centre
Stonehenge Therapeutic Community
T.A. Patterson Associates
Toward Common Ground
University of Guelph
Upper Grand District School Board
Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council
Waterloo Wellington John Howard Society
Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN)
Wellington County OPP
Wellington Catholic District School Board
Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health Unit
Wellington and Guelph Housing Services
Wyndham House
YM/YWCA of Guelph



MDSCNO Members

The WGDS is a member of the Municipal Drug Strategy Coordinators Network of Ontario (MDSCNO). These 31 Drug Strategies connect bi-monthly on a 2-hour teleconference to learn from one another, share best practices and seek solutions to common problems. The members of the MDSCNO are listed below:

- Brantford and Brant County Drug Strategy
- Chatham-Kent Drug Awareness Council (CKDAC)
- Fort Frances
- Fort William
- First Nation Healing Strategy
- Grey-Bruce
- Task Force on Crystal Meth and Other Drugs
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Drug Strategy
- Halton Region Drug Strategy
- Hamilton
- Addressing Substance Abuse in the Community of Kenora
- Kenora Substance Abuse and Mental Health Task Force
- Lanark County and the Town of Smiths Falls Municipal Drug Strategy
- M'Chigeeng First Nation Drug Strategy
- Middlesex London Drug Strategy
- North Bay & Area Drug Strategy
- Ottawa Drug Strategy
- Oxford Drug Awareness Committee
- Peel Region Drug Strategy
- Peterborough Drug Strategy
- Sioux Lookout Drug Strategy
- Simcoe-Muskoka Drug Strategy
- Community Drug Strategy for the City of Greater Sudbury
- LaCloche Foothills Drug Strategy
- Manitoulin Island Drug Strategy
- Sagamok First Nations Drug Strategy
- Temiskaming Drug Strategy
- Thunder Bay Drug Strategy
- Timmins and Area Drug Strategy
- Toronto Drug Strategy
- Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy
- Wellington-Guelph Drug Strategy
- Windsor Essex Community Drug Strategy
- York Region Drug Strategy