

Consumption & Treatment Services

Fact Sheet



What is a CTS?

Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) is an anonymous walk-in service offered 7 days per week for community members who use substances.

Services Provided at CTS Locations

- A space to consume substances under the supervision of a medical professional. In Guelph, the site includes four booths (photo above). Staff provide oversight and monitoring to ensure safety of individuals using the service.
- Distribution of harm reduction supplies, naloxone and the sharing of health education.
- Safe syringe disposal.
- Space for quiet activities, extending the length of supervision by trained staff.
- Foot and wound care, Hep C/HIV/STI screening and other medical assessments.
- Access to drug testing technologies.
- Connection to income supports, housing and other social services
- Support and referrals to addiction treatment, primary care, mental health supports and other community resources.
- Access to 7 day/week walk-in virtual addiction medicine

Evidence

1. Supporting Substance Use Care & Treatment

A wide range of evidence shows that CTS facilities reduce overdose-related risks, promote safer drug use practices, and support people who use drugs to access treatment and other health services.¹

Health Canada data indicates that across all sites in Canada, there were 4,831,661 total visits and 515,718 referrals to health or social support services.²

2. Cost Savings

These services not only promote access to care, but also reduce healthcare costs.

A cost analysis conducted at Calgary's Safeworks Program found that 98% of overdoses were managed on-site. Over the program's duration, this resulted in total cost savings of over \$2.3 million by reducing the need for emergency department and ambulance services.³

3. Reduced Public Drug Use

Safe consumption sites have been shown to effectively reduce public drug use by providing low-barrier spaces for individuals to consume substances.

A US study published in 2022 study found that 76% of individuals using overdose prevention centre services would have otherwise used drugs in public spaces, highlighting the centers' role in decreasing public drug use and improving community safety.⁴

4. Safer Syringe Disposal

CTS are effective in reducing syringe litter in public areas.

Data from a 2021 study demonstrated that clients of the sites disposed of significantly fewer syringes in public areas. The average number of improperly disposed syringes over 30 days was 4 among individuals who used the site, compared to 10 among those who did not use the SCS.⁵

5. Reduction in Drug Poisoning Fatalities in Surrounding Neighborhoods

Research consistently shows that CTS play a crucial role in reducing fatalities.

For example, a 2024 study published in the Lancet found that neighborhoods within 500 meters of an site in Toronto experienced a 67% reduction in overdose mortality rates compared to those farther away.⁶

Guelph Community Health Centre CTS Data

- The Guelph CTS opened in May, 2018.
- Since opening, there have been over 41,000 visits to the CTS.
- Close to 1000 referrals have been made to primary care.
- In the past year, on average 44 people per month were connected to addiction treatments and supports.
- 311 drug poisonings have been reversed at the Guelph CTS since May 2018. Of these incidents, only 12 resulted in a transfer to the Emergency Department.
- There have been zero fatalities in the CTS.

Consumption and Treatment Services are a low barrier health care service that save lives. They are cost-effective, and connect community members to treatment, basic needs, healthcare, and other supports.

References

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