

October 2025

**COMMUNITY IMPACTS OF THE  
GUELPH CONSUMPTION AND  
TREATMENT SERVICE (CTS)  
CLOSURE: A MIXED METHOD REPORT**



WELLINGTON GUELPH DRUG STRATEGY

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Care and Recovery Act (2024) mandated the closure of Guelph's Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) site on March 31, 2025. The CTS site provided a wide range of low-barrier services that supported people who use drugs, prevented drug poisonings and connected individuals to health and social services.

This report explores the community impacts of the CTS closure, including local drug poisoning trends before and after March 31, 2025. These preliminary findings are intended to enhance understanding of community needs following the CTS closure and guide future planning and response efforts.

A mixed-methods approach is used, combining analysis of local surveillance (FAST) data on drug poisoning incidents with interviews with representatives of 14 community organizations that work with people who use substances. The quantitative analysis focused on drug poisoning data from April-June 2024 and April-June 2025, comparing the three-month periods before and after the CTS closure to observe any early changes in substance-related incidents. The quantitative data provided insight into trends and patterns, while the qualitative interviews highlighted community perspectives. Together, these methods provide a snapshot of the early impacts of the CTS closure.

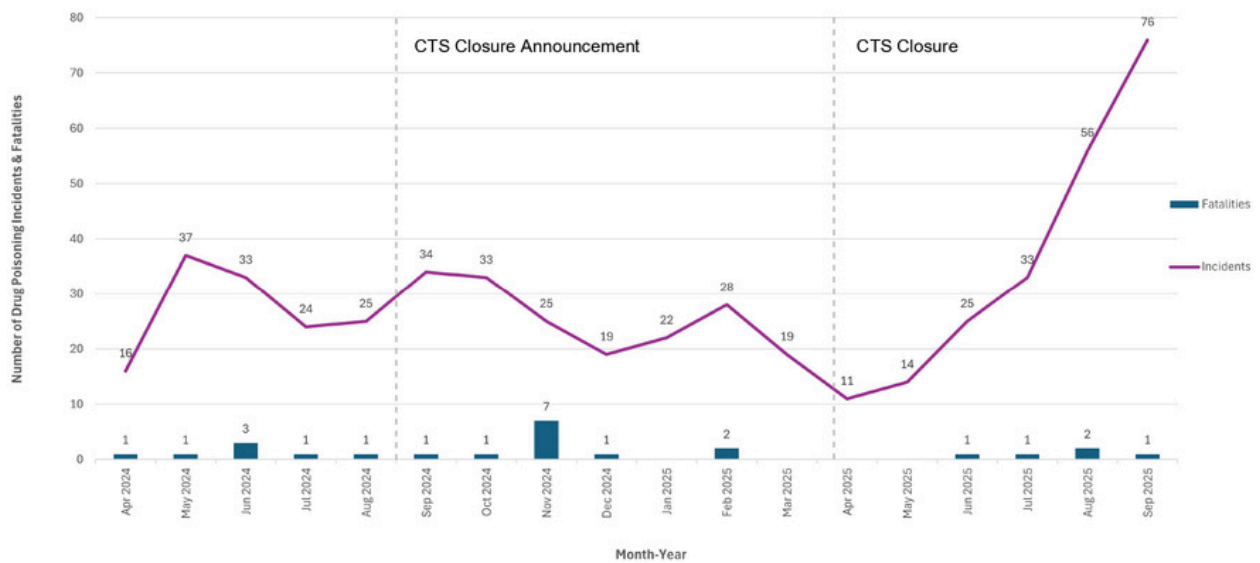
Please note: These findings reflect preliminary data and provide an early perspective on potential impacts post-CTS closure. Given that the service landscape is still evolving, further data collection and monitoring are required. Preliminary results should be interpreted cautiously.

## KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

### Quantitative Findings:

- From April–June 2025, following the Guelph CTS closure, the number of reported drug poisoning incidents was lower compared to the same period in 2024. This observed decrease should be interpreted with caution and not viewed as an indicator of the CTS's community impact.
- Many complex factors (i.e., access to services, current trends in the unregulated drug supply, and reporting practices) may influence the number and location of drug poisoning incidents. The unregulated drug supply remains highly unpredictable, and fluctuations in potency, composition, and availability can impact the number of poisonings at any given time.
- Fentanyl remained the most reported suspected substance in both time periods, involved in over half of all reported incidents.
- Downtown–Sunny Acres remained the neighbourhood with the highest number of reported drug poisoning incidents across April–June 2024 and 2025, indicating a potential hotspot for poisonings in Guelph. Increases were seen in Onward Willow and Waverly in 2025.

- Drug poisoning incidents occurred most often in private residences from April–June 2025, compared to outdoor public spaces in 2024, indicating changes in substance use patterns.



From April–June 2025, following the Guelph CTS closure, the number of reported drug poisoning incidents was lower compared to the same period in 2024. However, beginning in July 2025, a sharp and sustained increase was observed through to September. While this upward trend coincides with the period following the CTS closure, data should not be interpreted as direct evidence of causation. Continued monitoring will be needed to understand evolving trends.

### Qualitative Insights from Community Partners:

- Respondents reported notable shifts in substance use patterns in the community involving more people using substances in isolated, hidden, or public spaces, often driven by stigma and the lack of alternatives.
- Organizations responded with adaptive strategies, including increased staff trainings, to address service gaps temporarily.
- Participants reported that staff are navigating unclear policies, limited coordinated care, and weakened relationships with clients, while also managing increasingly complex client needs.
- Widespread uncertainty and concerns about the operation of current and new services.
- Beyond providing a safe consumption space, the CTS fostered trust, connection, and access to broader supports; its closure has raised concerns about reduced access to care, the loss of critical relationships and pathways to support.

# PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings have informed key recommendations for responsive strategies to address the impact of the CTS closure in Guelph. Recommendations include:

- **Strengthen Low-Barrier Options:** Establish drop-in spaces that reduce hidden/isolated use, and support informal connections to health and social services.
- **Enhance Data Collection and Ongoing Evaluation to Inform System Response:** Broaden FAST reporting partners, including lived/living experience perspectives, and strengthen real-time monitoring to inform evidence-based system planning.
- **Develop Targeted Interventions for Private Residences:** Expand supports (e.g., safer use kits, peer outreach, phone-based services) to address rising drug poisoning incidents in homes, shelters, and supportive housing.
- **Ensure Continuity and Communication During Service Transitions:** Implement clear communication and transition planning to minimize disruption and maintain trust when services are restructured or relocated.
- **Expand Outreach and Mobile Services:** Expansion of programs like the HOME outreach service can provide flexible supports in priority neighborhoods, informed by FAST data.
- **Address Stigma Through Community Education:** Advance community-wide education campaigns and health-focused policy approaches to reduce stigma and support safer, more inclusive responses to substance use.

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## ABOUT THE WELLINGTON GUELPH DRUG STRATEGY

The Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy is a coalition of cross-sectoral partner agencies and members of the lived and living experience community, who are working to implement a 4-pillar drug strategy in the municipalities of Wellington County and the City of Guelph. The pillars include prevention, community safety, harm reduction, and treatment & recovery.