

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Supervised Consumption Services Needs Assessment

### What is the report about?

The report shares the findings and recommendations from the Supervised Consumption Services Needs Assessment. The project explored the need for supervised consumption services (SCS) in four communities: Kenora, Dryden, Fort Frances, and Sioux Lookout. The report aims to inform local stakeholders about whether these communities could benefit from SCS.

The project's objectives included:

- Determining stakeholder and intended users' views on the suitability of SCS.
- Learning what the community perspectives are on SCS.
- Determining how SCS could be integrated within existing services in the community, including which services could be enhanced to provide SCS.
- Exploring suitable potential locations based on accessibility and safety for both clients and others.

### What are Supervised Consumption Services (SCS)?

Supervised consumption services are life-saving health services that provide a safe and clean environment for people to consume pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of qualified staff. These services go by different names, including Overdose Prevention Sites (OPS), Supervised Injection Sites (SIS), and Drug Consumption Rooms (DCR). Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) is the new name used in Ontario for these services.

### What are the benefits of supervised consumption services?

Supervised consumption services help to save lives, connect people to social services, and serve as pathways to treatment. They reduce the risk of accidental overdose, connect people to healthcare, social services, and treatment, and reduce public drug use and discarded drug equipment. They also reduce the spread of infectious diseases, such as HIV, and reduce the strain on emergency medical services.

### Why did the NWHU commission this report?

The drug crisis has brought to light the devastating effects of substance on individuals, families, and communities across Canada. Observing the burden of the crisis and recognizing the increased questions about supervised consumption, NWHU felt compelled to initiate a local assessment of SCS as a harm reduction strategy. This work is part of NWHU's mandate as outlined in the Ontario Public Health Standards.



## **Who was involved in developing the surveys and the report?**

LBCG Consulting for Impact led and managed the project and project team which was made up of professionals with various backgrounds and expertise. Team members from the Ontario Public Health Association brought public health knowledge in research, multidisciplinary networks, and advocacy on health public policy. The team included three researchers with experience in SCS research, design, and operations. All team members who contributed to the project work are listed in Appendix A of the report.

## **What was the role of NWHU in this report?**

NWHU commissioned the report, procuring the services of the consultant team through an open procurement process. NWHU provided oversight, support, and feedback to the consultant team, while remaining neutral on the development of the findings.

## **How and why did you survey people who use drugs?**

A key aspect of a needs assessment is to survey the intended service users of a potential service. For this project, the intended users are people who use drugs.

A cash honorarium was given to each research participant after completing the survey. Offering an incentive to research participants is a supported practice within health and social research.

## **What are the report's recommendations?**

The report recommends that local stakeholders use the findings as a basis to further community-specific discussions about if and how to proceed to implement an SCS and to pursue an SCS application to Health Canada. It also outlines key initial decisions and actions to be made if local stakeholders choose to pursue SCS in their communities.

## **What are the next steps?**

NWHU will continue to provide information on the impacts of substance use, injection drug use, and opioid overdoses to partner agencies and the public. They will also communicate to the public on the impacts of SCS on the health of the population. NWHU will be sharing the report with relevant local committees in each of the four communities for discussion.



## How does someone apply to have supervised consumption services (SCS)?

To operate supervised consumption services (SCS) in Canada, it is required that an application for an exemption under section 56.1 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act is submitted to Health Canada.

If an organization requires funding for SCS, an application can also be made to the Ontario Ministry of Health under the Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) funding program.

The information on the Health Canada exemption application can be found here: [Apply to run a supervised consumptions site: Overview](#)

The provincial Consumption and Treatment Services application guide can be found here: [Consumption and Treatment Services: Application Guide](#)

## How can I learn more about supervised consumption services?

- Health Canada. *Canadian drugs and substances strategy*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/canadian-drugs-substances-strategy.html>
- List of existing supervised consumption services across Canada - <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/supervised-consumption-sites/status-application.html>
- Video testimonials from various Sudbury community members who share their informed perspective on why supervised consumption and treatment services (SCTS) can play an important part in reducing the harms of substances in their community. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEZBip7j0tjVOBdHxfvh3Njo2samGmh3I>
- [Supervised consumption sites: Vancouver Coastal Health](#)
- CATIE Harm Reduction Fundamentals: A toolkit for service providers- [www.catie.ca/harmreduction](http://www.catie.ca/harmreduction)
- Best practices for health and social service providers working with people who use drugs - <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcqlclefindmkaj/https://bloodties.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/best-practices-graphic-1.pdf>
- Literature review of supervised injection facilities as harm reduction - <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2021.04.017>
- Changing Circumstances Surrounding Opioid-Related Deaths in Ontario during the COVID-19 Pandemic: [https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/c/2021/changing-circumstances-surrounding-opioid-related-deaths.pdf?sc\\_lang=en](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/c/2021/changing-circumstances-surrounding-opioid-related-deaths.pdf?sc_lang=en)