



Overdose Prevention & Education  
Network of Niagara  
Newsletter

**May 2021**



Alerts are still going out, as needed, in the Region. OPENN is working hard to get the alerts to the people who need to see them. The Knowledge Exchange Working Group and People with Lived and Living Experience Working Group will be exploring new ways to distribute the alerts, so that they are seen where they are needed the most.

We have also started to send out cautionary memorandums to key front line providers when there are concerns around the drug supply that are dated or not significant enough to trigger our Advisory notice to go out.

[niagararegion.ca/living/health\\_wellness/alc-sub-abuse/drugs/overdose-prevention.aspx](https://niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/alc-sub-abuse/drugs/overdose-prevention.aspx)



## Steering Committee Update

This quarter has shown increased media engagement, regarding the need for continued attention on overdoses and the loss of life in Niagara.

On April 7th, there was a feature on CH News, from Hamilton, “Opioid Crisis in Niagara is ‘out of control’”.

<https://www.chch.com/opioid-crisis-in-niagara-is-out-of-control/>

An article in the Niagara Independent, April 20th, again repeated that theme, “Opioid Crisis ‘out of control’ in Niagara”.

<https://niagaraindependent.ca/opioid-crisis-out-of-control-in-niagara/>

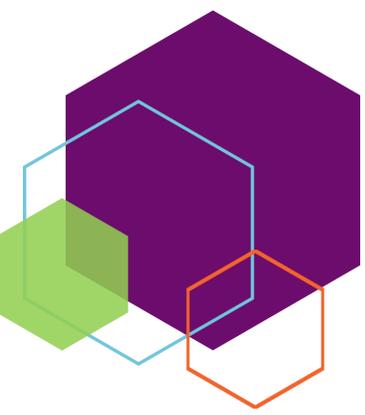
## Data/Surveillance Update

EMS responses are steadily rising in 2021, from 55 in January, to 64 in February and 84 in March.

Looking at demographics shows that there is almost an equal number of males and females for suspected overdoses, with 46% male and 44% female, although the numbers show in the 15-29 year old group a higher number of females.

Emergency Department visits for opioid overdoses also continue to rise and the majority of suspected drug related deaths are opiate related.

Niagara is second to Toronto, for the number of overdose deaths in Ontario.



## Working Group Updates

### Safe Supply Working Group

The Continuing Medical Education course is scheduled for September 29th, 2021 from 1:30-4:00 pm. The group is also talking with Toronto Public Health, regarding fair price pharmacy supply.

### Knowledge Transfer

There is investigation as to whether televisions in vaccination clinics would be willing to have OPENN messaging included in their programming.

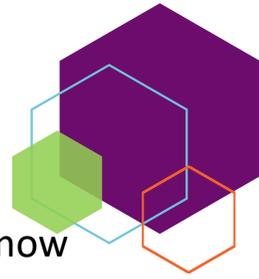
### People with Lived and Living Experience

“Nothing about me without me”, the group is looking for ways to engage PWLLE, to find out what is most important to them and how they would like to influence decisions. The group also discovered a phone support service, more information is available through 211, for all of Niagara. This service offers support for people using alone and will send emergency services if required.

### Prevention Planning

A dashboard of recommendations has been created from the Substance Use Report, this dashboard will be shared by the prevention planning group on the InCommunities website.



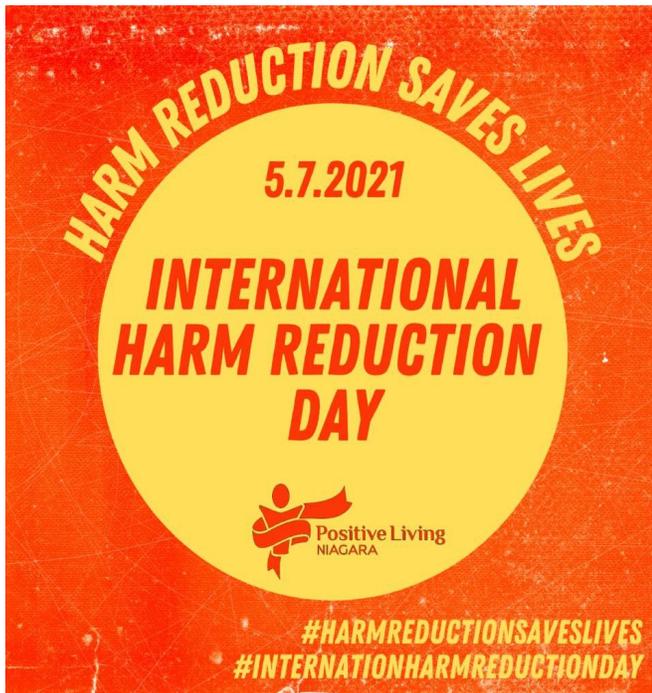


## Program Service Update

Positive Living Niagara will be conducting more community clean-ups, now that the weather is improving. These clean-ups are now happening in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls and Welland. People in the community are paid a small honorarium to participate. Lately we have more volunteers than anticipated allowing for two groups to go out.

CASON youth programs for 25 years and under have received funding to increase services to the Youth Wellness Hub and Youth Recovery Group. They are also active online with students, peer support workers and the Home for Good early intervention team.

## International Harm Reduction Overdose Awareness day



Friday May 7th was International Harm Reduction Overdose Awareness Day.

The online event was a great success! Our video was well received, with many views and was shared by many of our OPENN Member Agencies.

