

Guelph Overdose Prevention Site Evaluation: Key Findings

The Overdose Prevention Site (OPS)* offers:

A safe, legal place to use drugs | Harm reduction supplies (e.g., needles, naloxone) | Response to overdose | On-site nurse and peer support | Referrals to other services and resources

Evaluation Questions

1. What are the strengths and challenges of the OPS?
2. What are the positive and negative short-term outcomes for clients?
3. Is an OPS an effective way to keep people who use substances safe?

From May 2018 to March 2019, data were collected from:

- 51 OPS client interviews
- 14 OPS staff interviews
- OPS internal tracking database

KEY FINDINGS

Visits
 **4,085**

Unique Clients
 **401**

Repeat Clients
 **43%**

STRENGTHS

- Friendly, caring and helpful staff
- Accessible location
- Welcoming, safe environment
- Access to harm reduction supplies and education
- On-site medical care
- Referrals to other services (e.g., housing, healthcare, treatment)



CHALLENGES

- Small space
- Privacy concerns
- Hours of operation
- Wait times
- Limited staff time and coverage
- Limitations of some services to accept referrals



IMPACTS

85% of interviewed clients said the OPS is important to their overall health. ❤️

88% of interviewed clients said the OPS is important to their overall safety. 🤝



POSITIVE

Prevents overdose deaths

Overdoses **45** | Overdoses reversed **100%** | Deaths **0**

Treated with naloxone **33%** | Transferred to emergency department **7%**

"If I had used somewhere else I would be dead." – Client

Promotes safer ways to use

"This space has helped with my safety. Staff help me to be more cautious to use a little bit first and to not overdo it" – Client

Fosters trusting relationships & a sense of belonging

"They ask questions and are genuinely interested in my life, they want to help....they care about me." – Client

Increases access to medical care

"It's one of my top regular interactions with healthcare." – Client

Increases connections to community services

"If you want treatment or anything, or want to start in a different direction, they are there to help... And not judge you either if you come back tomorrow." – Client



NEGATIVE

Some clients reported:

- Feeling stress or concern about being seen at the OPS
- Using substances in riskier (unsupervised) places when wait times are too long



The OPS has many positive impacts on clients. It reduces the harms related to substance use and is an effective way to keep people who use the service safe. The OPS is one important part of a larger system needed to address substance use needs in the community.

Guelph's OPS is a partnership among the Guelph Community Health Centre (CHC), HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health (ARCH) and the Guelph Family Health Team. The evaluation was led by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health in partnership with the Guelph CHC, ARCH and Toward Common Ground.

For full results, contact Jennifer MacLeod at Jennifer.macleod@wdgpublichealth.ca or 1-800-265-7293 ext. 4370.

Limitations: Client interviews likely engaged regular versus occasional OPS users; however, almost half of the clients who attended the OPS during the interview time period were interviewed. Evaluation findings do not include feedback from individuals who are not using the site. Broader community impact was not assessed as part of this evaluation but will continue to be monitored and included in future evaluations.

*As of March 29, 2019, the OPS is transitioning to a Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS).