



Health Santé
Canada Canada

Controlled Substances and Cannabis Branch
150 Tunney's Pasture Driveway
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0K9

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Dear Colleagues and Partner Organizations,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to compound the ongoing public health crisis related to high rates of opioid overdose and deaths, as well as acute substance use harms. There are numerous indications that the street supply is growing even more unpredictable as normal supply channels are disrupted, and supports for people who use drugs are strained.

At this time, there is both a heightened need to reduce avoidable pressures on health care systems, and a need to support vulnerable populations, such as people who use drugs, who may be more at risk or unable to self-isolate given their circumstances.

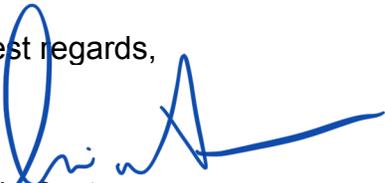
Providing flexible treatment options or a safer alternative to street drugs can, particularly now, support people who use drugs by reducing the risk of overdose, infection and withdrawal for those who are maintaining physical distancing and those who must self-isolate. However, we have heard from a number of stakeholders that more information about how to facilitate these services in this context would be helpful.

To that end, Health Canada has compiled a number of resources in an effort to provide clarity regarding the rules that apply for substance use disorder treatment or providing a pharmaceutical grade alternative to the toxic street supply in Canada, in the context of COVID-19. This includes:

- A regulatory pathways graphic;
- Frequently asked questions and answers related to the legislative and regulatory requirements for substance use disorder treatment/safer supply;
- A list of all relevant exemptions that have been issued under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*;
- Formulary coverage under drug plans of medications used in substance use disorder treatment and as pharmaceutical grade alternatives to the illegal supply; and
- Resources related to substance use disorder treatment and providing safer supply, both in general and during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Some of this information will be posted online, and documents will be updated from time to time. A link to the full set of toolkit documents can be found at this Dropbox link: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/x622qndzvmydsvm/AABi888G_Ase6T0-N1Pd3uboa?dl=0. I invite you to pass on this information. If you have any questions, please contact the Controlled Substances Directorate at hc.cdss-scdas.sc@canada.ca.

Best regards,


Eric Costen
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Health Canada