

# Addressing Canada's opioid crisis in alignment with the targets of the Political Declaration

Michelle Boudreau, Director General, Health Canada  
Government of Canada  
CND Intersessional Meeting, November 7-9, 2018

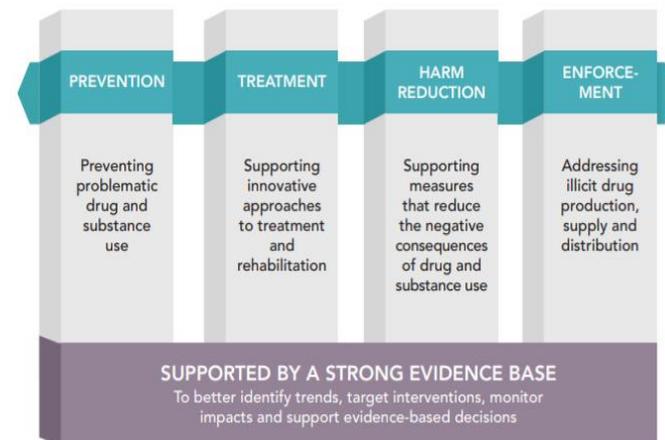


# Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy (CDSS)

- The Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy (CDSS) is a health focussed approach to substance use issues in Canada.
- It is a comprehensive, collaborative and compassionate approach that is grounded in evidence.
- It includes **harm reduction** as a key pillar, alongside **prevention, treatment, and enforcement**.
- It emphasizes a balanced approach to drug policy, and reflects Canada's support for the UNGASS outcomes document

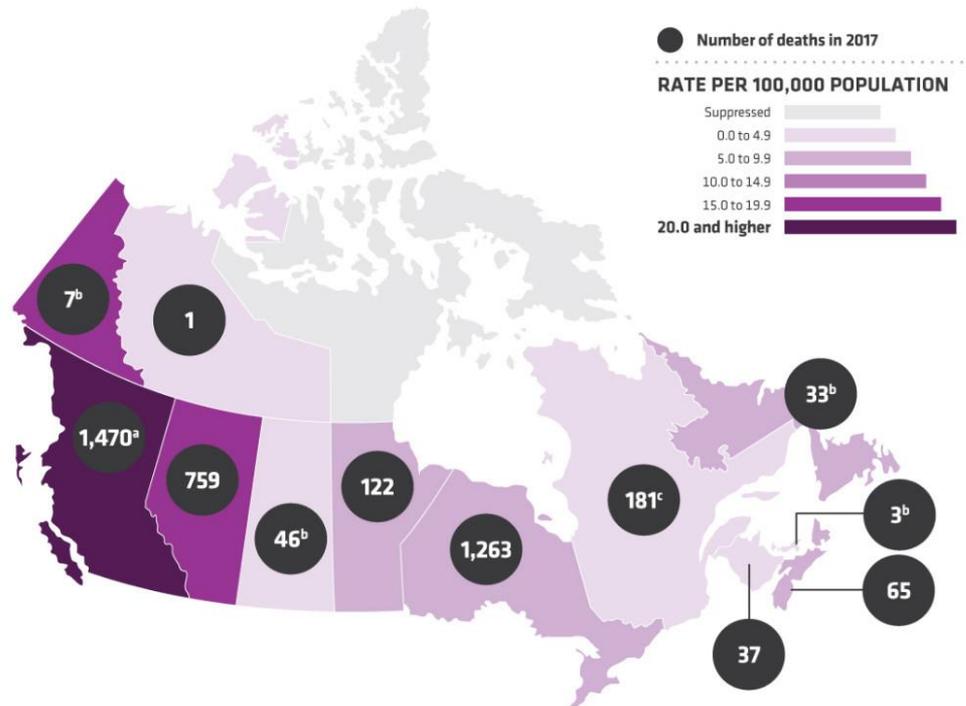
## CANADIAN DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES STRATEGY

A COMPREHENSIVE, COLLABORATIVE, COMPASSIONATE AND EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO DRUG POLICY



# Canada's Opioid Crisis

There were 3,996 apparent opioid-related deaths in Canada in 2017



a Includes deaths related to all illicit drugs including, but not limited to, opioids.  
 b Includes deaths with completed investigations only.  
 c Includes deaths related to all illicit drugs including, but not limited to, opioids, from July to December only. This number is expected to rise.

**92%** of deaths occurred were accidental



**78%** of accidental deaths occurred among men

**22%** were among women

**28%** of apparent opioid-related deaths in 2017 occurred among individuals in the 30 to 39 year age group.

**There have been more than 8,000 apparent opioid-related deaths since 2016**

# Demand reduction: Preventative approaches to the Opioid Crisis

Increasing Canadians' knowledge of opioids is key to demand reduction, and to achieve this we have:

- Developed national prescription guidelines that provides updated information for medical professionals and patients about the use of opioids for chronic pain management
- Better informed Canadians about the risks associated with opioid use, through opioid warning stickers and patient handouts mandatory with opioid prescriptions
- Increased transparency in the marketing and promotion of therapies for pain management by engaging pharmaceutical companies.
  - In June 2018, the Minister of Health issued a letter to Canadian manufacturers and distributors of opioids, seeking their commitment to respond to the opioid crisis by immediately ceasing any and all marketing and advertising of opioids to healthcare professionals.

# Demand reduction: Preventative approaches to illicit opioids

Reducing demand for illicit opioids like fentanyl is complex but Canada has taken action by:

- Funding innovative illicit opioid demand reduction and prevention projects with Canadian Provinces/Territories and non-profit organizations through the Substance Use and Abuse Program (SUAP)
- Launching the 'Know More' awareness campaign in January 2018 to educate high school students of the dangers of opioid use
- Raising awareness among Canadians of illicit opioids and other synthetic drugs through the recently published Chief Public Health Officer Report on problematic substance use among youth

# Supply Reduction: Enforcement and Regulation

To prevent illegal manufacturing, trafficking, and the diversion of opioids, Canada has:

- Amended the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA) in 2016 to:
  - Make it illegal to import an unregistered designated device (i.e. pill press or encapsulator);
  - Enable Canada Border Services Agency officers to open international mail of any weight; and
  - Extends offences and penalties for pre-production activities.
- Engaged with the US and Mexico through the North American Dialogue on Drug Policy to increase trilateral coordination efforts to address the illicit manufacture and trafficking of illicit substances (e.g. fentanyl)
- Implemented the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Synthetic Drug Initiative to prevent the diversion of chemicals from foreign and domestic sources that fuel clandestine drug laboratories and reduce illicit drug production in Canada

# Supply Reduction: Enforcement and Regulation

- Introduced enhanced protocols and detection technology for frontline Border Services Officers interdicting illegal opioids at our borders
- Improved monitoring of distribution channels and increasing early identification of emerging issues by increasing knowledge exchange among domestic and international law enforcement agencies
- Canada is working closely with international partners to disrupt the export of illegally produced fentanyl.
- From April 2016 to June 2018, the Canada Border Services Agency has performed 270 seizures resulting in approximately 39.4 kg of synthetic opioids
  - Only a few milligrams of a powerful synthetic opioid, such as fentanyl or carfentanil, can lead to a fatal overdose.

# Diversion of and illicit trafficking of fentanyl precursors

- Fentanyl-related production chemicals, intermediates or precursors have been scheduled under the *Precursor Control Regulations* in 2016
- Canada conducts ongoing scientific analysis of other potential precursors to address the recent trend towards novel fentanyl analogues and derivatives that have emerged
- Continuing to look at adding new precursors. Currently under consideration:
  - Addition of “benzyl fentanyl and its analogues” and “despropionyl fentanyl and its analogues”
  - Expand the current listing for norfentanyl to include as potential analogues
- Continuing to engage our law enforcement partners at the RCMP and CBSA to monitor for new precursors across all illicit substance groups.

# Money laundering related to illicit drugs

Canada's *Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act* aims to prevent, detect and deter money laundering.

Allowed for the establishment of the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC) as the agency responsible for receiving and analyzing information from reporting entities and for providing financial intelligence to assist Canadian law enforcement to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

## FINTRAC:

- In 2016-17, provided 2,015 disclosures of actionable financial intelligence to Canada's police, law enforcement and national security agencies to assist their investigations of money laundering, terrorist activity financing and other threats to Canada's security.
- Drugs were identified in 20% of the Centre's financial intelligence disclosures in 2017.
- Published an operational alert in January 2018 to assist businesses in reporting suspicious financial transactions that may be linked to the trafficking of illicit fentanyl.

# More Information

## Canada.ca/opioids

Find information about:



### Opioids

Opioids relieve pain. Used properly they can often help. But problematic use can cause dependence, overdose and death.



### Opioid overdose

Overdose risks and signs: how to respond.



### Naloxone

Where to get a naloxone kit.



### Supervised consumption sites

Find requirements, guidance, locations.



### Stigma

Defining stigma and why it matters.



### Government response

Our comprehensive, collaborative, compassionate and evidence-based response.

[hc.opioidresponse-interventionopioides.sc@canada.ca](mailto:hc.opioidresponse-interventionopioides.sc@canada.ca)