

# Lessons learned from supervised consumption and overdose prevention sites in Canada

PRESENTED BY

Amanda Giacomazzo, Moderator

Patrick McDougall

Shaun Hopkins

Lorraine Barnaby

Jason Mercredi

Cécile Kazatchkine

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## Webinar Agenda (1.5 hours)

- Welcome and speaker introductions

*Amanda Giacomazzo, 5 minutes*

- An overview of the national teleconference network for SCS/OPS

*Patrick McDougall, 12 minutes*

- Reflections from the national teleconference network for SCS/OPS

*Shaun Hopkins, 10 minutes*

*Lorraine Barnaby, 10 minutes*

*Jason Mercredi, 10 minutes*

*Cécile Kazatchkine, 10 minutes*

- Questions

*All, 30 minutes*

# Patrick McDougall

Patrick McDougall is the Director of Knowledge Translation and Evaluation at Vancouver's Dr. Peter Centre, which provides care and support services to people living with HIV who are also experiencing additional health and social vulnerabilities. The Dr. Peter Centre integrated supervised injection services in its model of care in 2002.

Patrick facilitates the national supervised consumption / overdose prevention site service providers teleconference and was recently elected as the co-chair of the Pacific AIDS Network's board of directors.

Originally from Halifax, Patrick has worked in a bilingual capacity in Halifax, Montreal, and Toronto. He holds a Master's in Public Administration from Dalhousie University and a Bachelor of Arts from McGill University.

# Perspective from Facilitating a National Supervised Consumption Site / Overdose Prevention Site Service Providers Teleconference

Patrick McDougall,  
Director of Knowledge Translation & Evaluation  
Dr. Peter Centre

Nov 6, 2019



Territorial acknowledgement

# Welcome & Agenda

- Background and evolution of the SCS/OPS Teleconference
- Summary of key themes that emerged
- What's worked / could be improved
  
- Shaun Hopkins – Manager, The Works
- Lorraine Barnaby – Supervised Consumption Services Manager, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre
- Jason Mercredi – Executive Director, AIDS Saskatoon
- Cécile Kazatchkine – Senior Policy Analyst, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
- Questions and Discussion

# Dr. Peter Centre



# Background

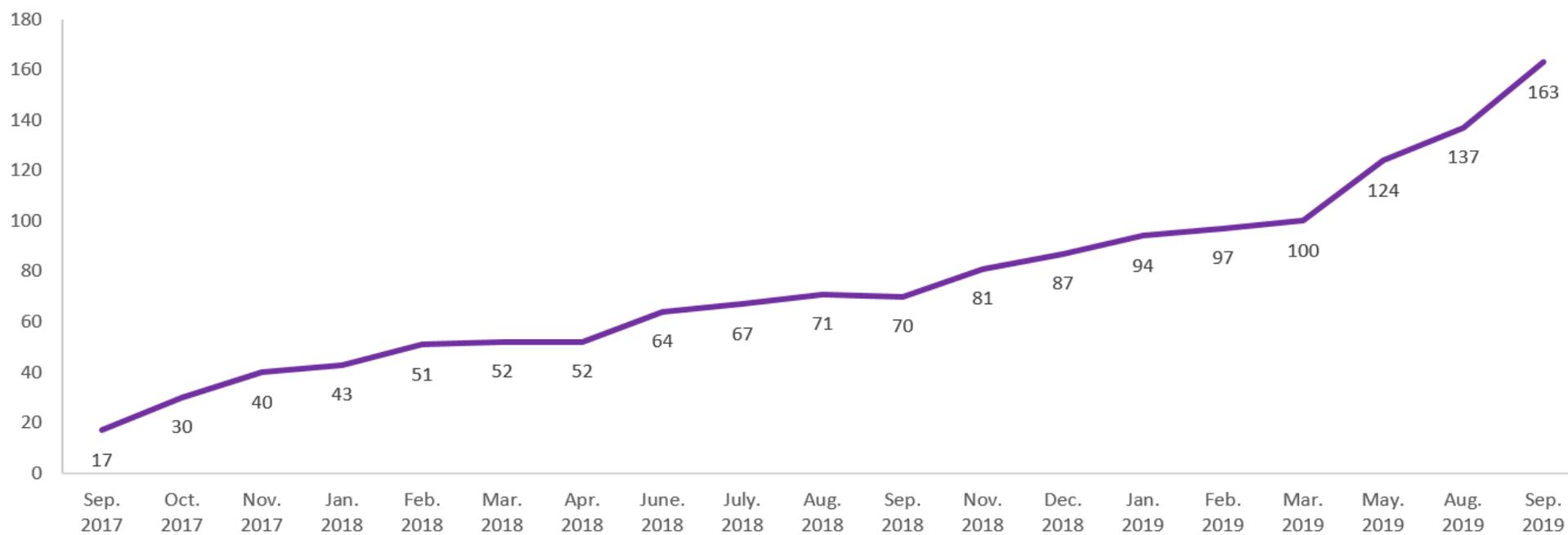
- Public Health Agency of Canada funded project
  - Submitted in 2016
  - Started in 2017
- Capacity building for 12 agencies starting supervised consumption services (SCS):
  - 4 in year 1; 2 more each subsequent year
- Several components to the project
- Interest in linking in with other agencies that had already started SCS

# Background

- Started a bilingual teleconference in Sept 2017
- Built off of other similar teleconferences (e.g., Canadian Drug Policy Coalition & Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network)
- Current and prospective SCS service providers starting with ~10 people from Vancouver, Surrey, Montreal, and Toronto
- Interest in having others join (snowball recruitment)

# Growth in number of teleconference participants

SCS / OPS Service Provider Teleconference - Number of People on the Email List



# Milestones Along the Way

- Teleconference discussions begin to focus on specific topics
- Many sites share the desire to offer additional services (e.g., peer assistance) and scale up those offered

- Dedicated discussions on iOAT
- Presentations on impact of peer assistance
- Focused presentations on housing related topics (e.g., Housing Overdose Prevention Strategies, Brave Button)

Teleconference Starts

2017

Scaling up services

2018

Community Engagement

Tailoring Discussion

2019

Shift in Delivery

- The first few teleconferences explore numerous topics related to service delivery in a broad manner

- Re-enforcing the importance of community engagement as efforts from those opposed to SCS/OPS emerge

- Decision made to move forward with targeted videocalls (supplemented by quarterly teleconferences)
- Detailed presentation on washroom assessment and overdose prevention

# Key Themes

- Expanding Models
- Operational Considerations
- Navigating Regulatory Considerations
- Community Engagement
- Supporting Staff Resiliency

# Expanding Models

- Incorporating SCS/OPS in housing settings
- Assisted injection
- Inhalation services
- Quality drug testing
- 24-hour services
- Women-only and/or trans-only locations or hours
- Allowances for splitting and sharing of drugs
- Intravenous opioid agonist therapy (iOAT)
- Access to low barrier safe supply

# Operational Considerations

- Peer involvement
- Strategies to prevent wait times
- Time limits
- Policies for personal belongings
- Clear signage
- Consistent policies and procedures
- People using outside facilities or in the washrooms
- Complex overdoses

# Navigating Regulatory Considerations

- Dependence on political climate federally, provincially, municipally
- Regulations limiting:
  - Splitting or sharing of drugs
  - Hiring of staff with a criminal record
  - Assisted injection
- Exemption Process
- Engaging other partners

# Community Engagement

- Opposition may come from the general public, the surrounding community, or other clients or staff
- Community opposition has included:
  - Negative media
  - Court challenges
  - Needing to relocate

# Community Engagement

- Allocating resources and staff capacity
- Engaging stakeholders
- Proactive measures
- Hosting engaging community consultations
- Shortening wait times

# Email distribution list

- Sharing reports
- Statements
- Staffing levels descriptions Google doc
- Surveys

# What's worked / could be improved

## What's worked:

- Bilingual
- Hearing what's going on across the country
- New partners, but large majority is still service providers
- Engaging presentations / sharing tools

## What could be improved:

- Updates are too short to get into a lot of detail
- Challenging to get discussions in large groups
- Is it high barrier? Relevant?
- Finding out why folks have stopped joining the calls
- Reaching out to people to join the calls

# Acknowledgements

Thank you!

*We would like to thank and acknowledge the contribution of everyone who has participated in the teleconference.*

*The teleconference has been made possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.*

## Shaun Hopkins

Shaun Hopkins has been the Manager of The Works harm reduction program at Toronto Public Health for 28 years. During her time at The Works, she implemented the first public health operated opioid substitution program in Canada, the first Canadian public health run Naloxone program and the first public health operated supervised injection service in Ontario.

Since August, 2017, Shaun has operated a supervised injection service in the heart of downtown Toronto. The service is one of the busiest in Toronto, with over 60,000 visits and over 1000 overdoses.

# The Importance of Information Sharing

**Shaun Hopkins**  
**Manager**  
**The Works, Toronto Public Health**

# Why there was a need for the teleconferences

- Most of us were new to SCS service delivery
- The importance of learning from those who had already been doing the work
- The value of connecting across Canada – build a community of practice
- Support for each other
- Sharing strategies, resources, supply ideas, protocols, job descriptions, how to support staff etc.
- Just hearing each other and relating to each other

# What was achieved?

Sense of community

Increase in the knowledge base across  
Canada

The opportunity to brainstorm really hard  
issues i.e. how to facilitate the introduction  
of these programs into communities

What works/what doesn't so we don't repeat  
the same mistakes

## What did we learn from each other?

- All of the strategies can work, you have to have the time and funding to do them
- It isn't going to be easy
- Outreach, constant communication, honesty, good data, consistent talking points, include people with lived experience, joint community projects all work

Recommend continuing the conversation either through teleconferences and/or face-to-face

Important to have subgroups on specific topics i.e. working with stakeholders so that time is saved and work is targeted

## **Lorraine Barnaby**

Lorraine Barnaby is currently the Urban Health Manager, Supervised Consumption Services at Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (PQWCHC). She has been working in the field of harm reduction, homelessness and health promotion for over 20 years.

For almost twenty years, Lorraine has overseen the development of numerous harm reduction, health promotion, community-based research, and community development, engagement and advocacy initiatives at PQWCHC. Her work has focused on initiatives that work towards enhancing the health and wellbeing of, people who use drugs, homeless and street-involved individuals and other marginalized communities. She brings extensive experience in working with governmental and non-profit organizations, committees and task groups.



**PARKDALE  
QUEEN WEST**  
Community  
Health Centre

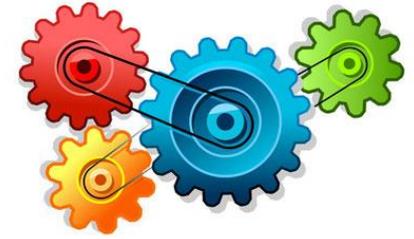
## The importance of Information Sharing

Lorraine Barnaby  
Manager, Urban  
Health – Supervised  
Consumption  
Services

# Impact of Participating in Teleconferences



- Opportunity to share & discuss service models, and operational needs & challenges
- Facilitates SCS/OPSs in operational stage to provide support to each other, as well as those in planning stages. Forum to share tips, documents & mentoring support
- Sharing info re: changes to drug supply
- Strategic preparedness regarding present & future provincial & federal political developments that may impact SCS/OPS



# Operational Considerations

- Design, renovation and furniture/equipment
- Ventilation systems – Ministry of Labor inspections
- Challenges to providing inhalation services
- Integrating SCS/OPS into existing buildings/services
- Ethical & logistical challenges pertaining to data collection & documentation
- Setting up, maintaining & managing the challenges with assisted injection
- Best practices surrounding IOATS

- Staffing models & training needs/challenges
- Policies/protocols regarding staff use of SCS/OPS
- Creating welcoming & safe spaces while managing service user flow
- Managing/understanding service user behavior while enforcing rules amidst the overdose crisis: developing & enforcing protocols that address the collective & individual safety of service users & staff
- Managing atypical overdoses (i.e. flailing)
- Building trust with service users – challenges in different service models (i.e. housing sector)



## Going Forward - Ideas for Improvement

- DPC to establish a national repository or resource library (resource hub) encompassing policies/protocols, best practices, design/floor plans, furniture, equipment, etc.
- Categorizing calls & informing participants of content covered in advance will assist teleconference in being responsive and useful to audience
- Incorporating a peer panel presentation via the teleconference

- Categorizing calls & informing participants of content in advance will assist teleconference in being responsive and useful to audience
- Division of future teleconferences according to:
  - Organizational level (governmental vs. non-governmental); individual role (managerial/supervisor vs. frontline staff); & geographic location (national vs. local discourses)
  - Presentations & topics relevant to stage of organizational development (planning vs. operational stages) & sectoral expertise (healthcare vs. human resources)

# Contact Information

Lorraine Barnaby, Urban Health Manager, SCS/CTS

416-703-8482 ext. 2333

[lbarnaby@pqwchc.ca](mailto:lbarnaby@pqwchc.ca)

[www.pqwchc.org](http://www.pqwchc.org)

**Queen West site:** 416-703-8482 ext. 2104/05

**Parkdale site:** 416-537-2455 ext. 1297

*Thank you*

## **Jason Mercredi**

Jason Mercredi is the Executive Director of AIDS Saskatoon. He has been with the agency for 6 ½ years. He successfully advocated for the deregulation of Naloxone in Saskatchewan, drug pipes being available in Saskatchewan needle exchanges, co-founded Canada's National HIV Testing Day, and designed and implemented Canada's first Indigenous language condom campaign. He is currently establishing Saskatchewan's first Safe Consumption Site.

Jason is of Denesuline, Metis and Scottish ancestry and was born and raised in Treaty 6 territory and the Homeland of the Metis.

## Cécile Kazatchkine

Cécile Kazatchkine joined the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network as a policy analyst in 2009 and works on issues related to the criminalization of HIV non-disclosure, drug policy, and privacy. She recently co-authored a report on legal and policy barriers to supervised consumption services in Canada entitled "*Overdue for a change: scaling up supervised consumption services in Canada.*"

Cécile worked as counsel and litigator in France and holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Private Law and a Master's degree (*Maîtrise*) in English Law, a diploma in legal studies from Oxford University and a Master's degree (*Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies*) in Public International Law and International Organizations.

# The HIV Legal Network and SCS

- Defending and promoting the rights of people who use drugs through research and advocacy in Canada and internationally.
  - Drug policy reform (incl. call for decriminalization of activities related to personal use),
  - Access to harm reduction in prison,
  - **Removing legal and policy barriers to SCS.**

# SCS: an exceptional regime



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada



MENU ▾

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## Supervised consumption sites: status of applications

Below is a table of supervised consumption site applications received by Health Canada, indicating the status of each application.

If you want to operate a supervised consumption site for medical purposes in Canada, you must first obtain an exemption under section 56.1 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Find information about [how to apply for a supervised consumption site](#).

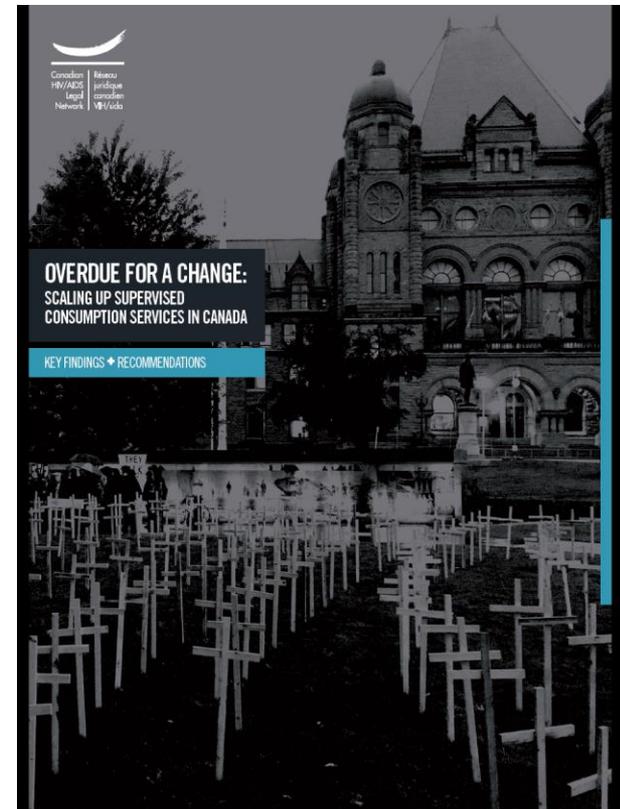
We are committed to processing applications for supervised consumption sites as quickly as possible.

### On this page

[www.canada.ca/en/health-canada](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada)

# SCS teleconferences: A unique source of information

- Collecting information about SCS implementation in Canada, barriers and facilitators as well as community needs.
- Helped inform report by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network (February 20, 2019) and follow up advocacy.
  - Navigating regulatory processes.
  - Expanding SCS models.
- Sharing experience beyond Canadian borders.



# SCS teleconferences: an opportunity for concerted community mobilization

The Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health  
Confederation Building  
356  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

**Re: The urgent need to secure supervised consumption services: An open letter to the federal Minister of Health**

We write to you as organizations concerned about the health and welfare of people who use drugs.

Canada continues to experience an unprecedented overdose crisis, and while important efforts have been made to scale up access to supervised consumption services (SCS) in Canada, they remain insufficient to respond to the crisis. With a federal election in just a few months, we are particularly concerned about the future of existing life-saving SCS that operate with short-term ministerial exemptions from Canada's drug laws (i.e. 1–3 years). Some sites' exemptions will expire early 2020.<sup>1</sup> Twelve of these sites are located in Ontario, where at least 1467 people died

# Next steps

- Community mobilization and support to service providers on the ground must remain a key component of the teleconferences.
- One identified priority : securing and expanding access to a wide range of SCS across Canada through:
  - Decriminalization of activities related to personal use.
  - A class exemption for SCS.
  - Appropriate funding at federal and provincial levels.

# Thank you!

Special thanks to  
Annie Foreman-McKay – co-author of *Overdue for a change* report.

Cécile Kazatchkine  
ckazatchkine@aidslaw.ca

Richard Elliott  
relliott@aidslaw.ca  
+1 416 595 1666 (ext. 229)

[www.aidslaw.ca/drugpolicy](http://www.aidslaw.ca/drugpolicy)



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## **Audience questions?**

Please type your question or comment into the chat box.

# Thank you

Please complete the webinar evaluation that will be provided following this webinar.

## PRESENTED BY

Amanda Giacomazzo, Moderator

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November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019