

# Local and regional opioid crisis: Sounding the alarm

An update to the Board of Health on the work of the City of Greater Sudbury Community Drug Strategy

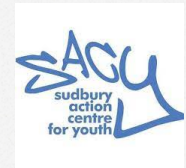
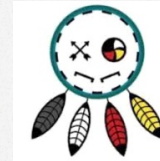
May 20, 2021

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# Who is the Community Drug Strategy?





# Community Drug Strategy: Needed now more than ever

## Changing Circumstances Surrounding **Opioid-Related Deaths** in Ontario during the COVID-19 Pandemic



**Physical distancing measures** introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in reduced service levels for pharmacies, outpatient clinics, and harm reduction sites that provide care to people who use drugs. Consequently, despite the intention to reduce the impact of COVID-19, these measures also **increased risks of drug-related overdose and death**.

Note: This infographic compares circumstances of opioid-related deaths occurring **pre-pandemic** (March 16, 2019 – December 31, 2019) and **during the pandemic** (March 16, 2020 – December 31, 2020).

**2,426 opioid-related deaths occurred in 2020, a 60% rise from 1,517 deaths in 2019**

# Northeast disproportionately impacted

## Location of Opioid-Related Deaths in Ontario



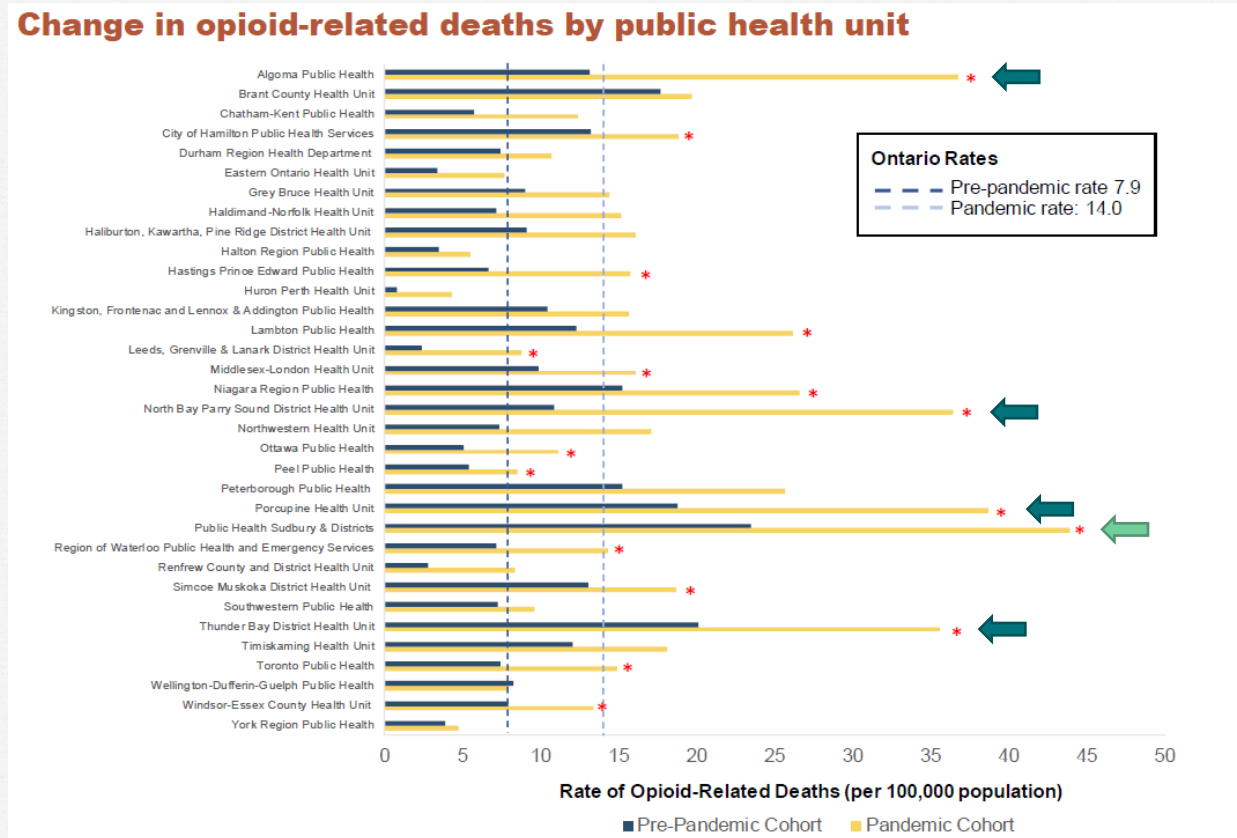
Rates of opioid-related death rose significantly in **half** of Ontario's public health units during the pandemic.

The highest rates of opioid-related death during the pandemic occurred in **Sudbury and Districts, Porcupine, and Algoma** public health units.

This may be due to **lower availability of services in rural and remote regions**, making it difficult to reach those at highest risk of overdose.

# Death rates by health unit

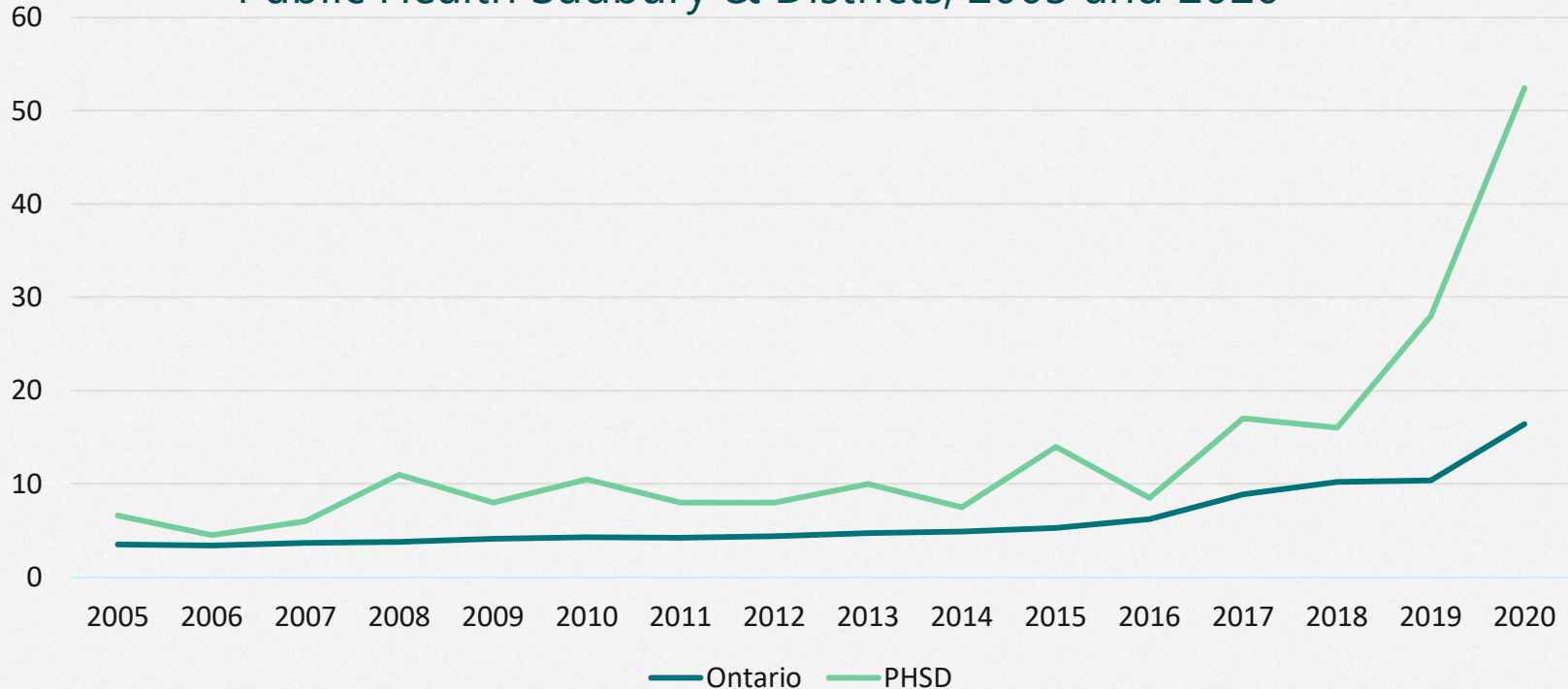
- PHSD is the highest
- The top five health units are all in the north; four are in the northeast





# Death rates trending upward

Rates of opioid-related mortality in Ontario and Public Health Sudbury & Districts, 2003 and 2020\*



\*2020 rates are preliminary

Data Source: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/fr/data-and-analysis/substance-use/interactive-opioid-tool>

# Numbers and the lives behind them





# What can we do?

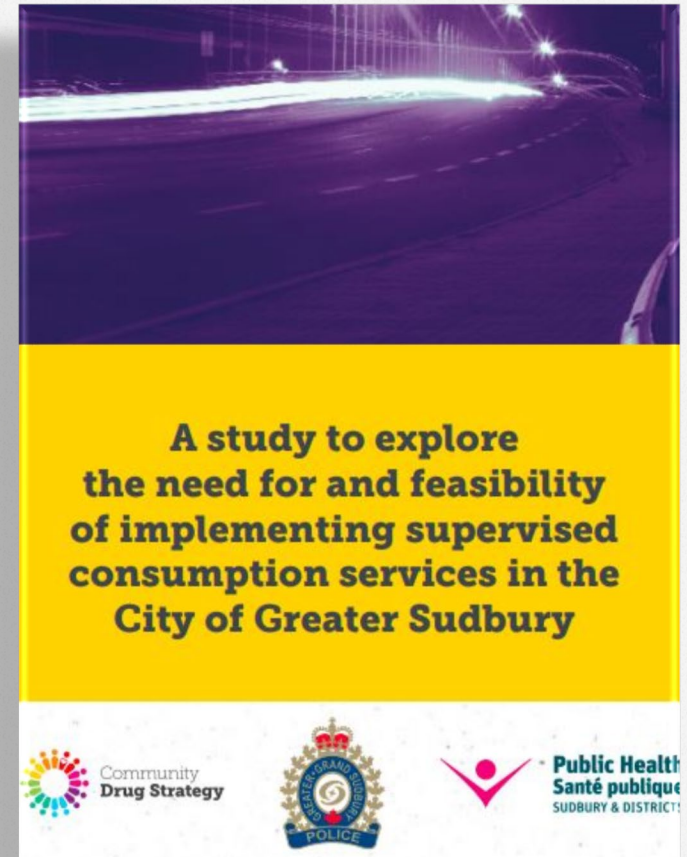
Immediate	Medium-term	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• safe consumption (e.g. Urgent Public Health Needs Site, STOPS)</li><li>• naloxone</li><li>• sterile supplies (e.g. needle exchange)</li><li>• outreach</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• supervised consumption and treatment services</li><li>• safe supply</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• anti-stigma</li><li>• prevention</li><li>• housing</li><li>• social determinants of health</li></ul>



# Supervised consumption and treatment services

## Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study (June 2020)

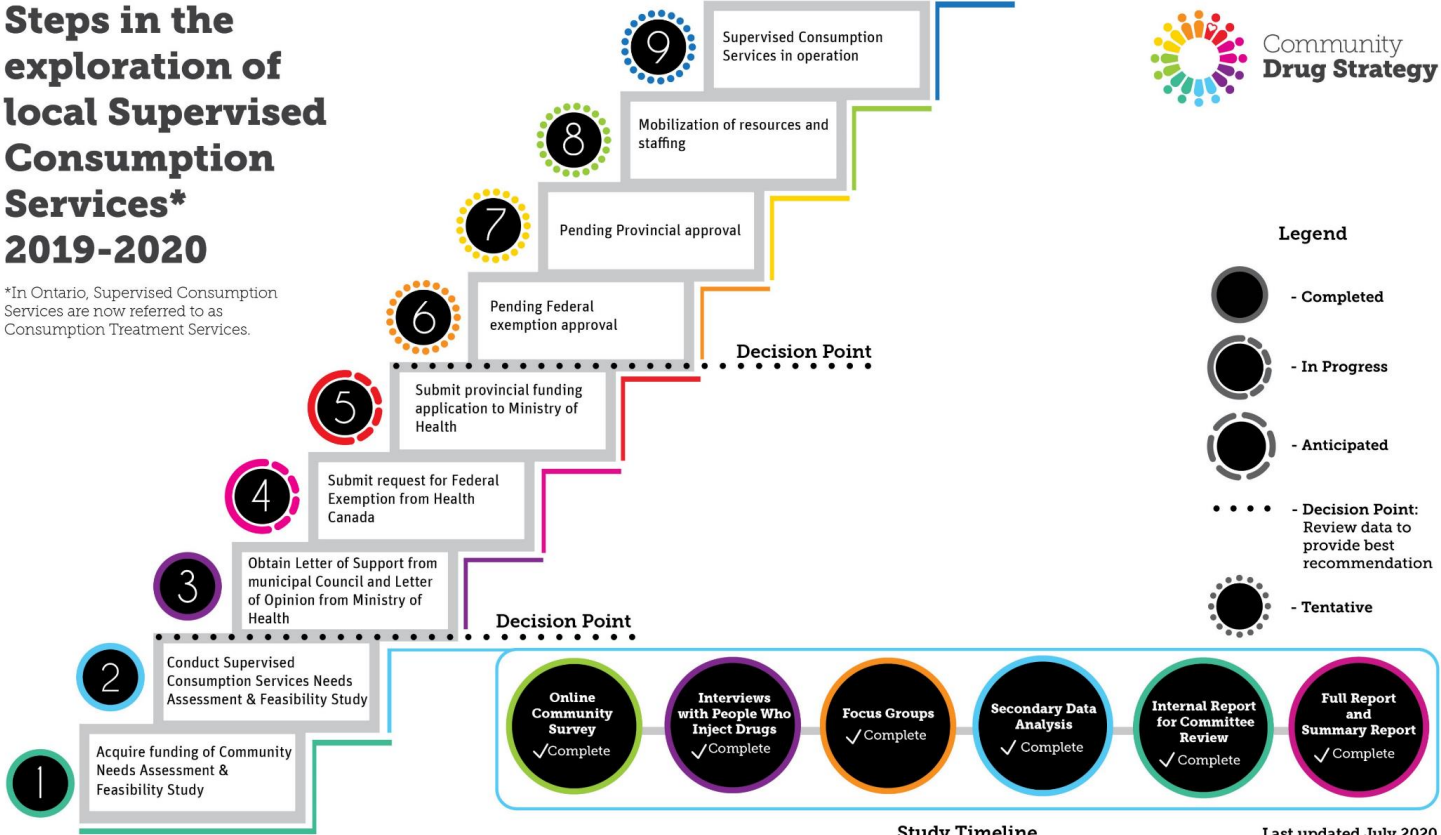
- **190 surveys** with people who inject drugs
- **2251 respondents** to a community-based survey
- **13 focus group sessions** with stakeholders from community including businesses and friends and family of people who inject drugs
- **60 people who use substances** were asked specific questions regarding preferred location and hours
- Secondary data from health and social service providers
- *Key findings:* we need a location ASAP and downtown is the preferred location



# We are stalled at #4

## Steps in the exploration of local Supervised Consumption Services\* 2019-2020

\*In Ontario, Supervised Consumption Services are now referred to as Consumption Treatment Services.



- Legend**
- - Completed
  - ◐ - In Progress
  - ◑ - Anticipated
  - ⋯ - Decision Point: Review data to provide best recommendation
  - ⦿ - Tentative

Study Timeline Last updated July 2020



# SCTS in Ontario – barriers and opportunities

- Currently, there are 19 supervised consumption and treatments services (SCTS) in Ontario.
- These SCTS are in 8 different cities including Ottawa, Toronto, and London.
- The only SCTS in northern Ontario is located in Thunder Bay.
- The existing SCTS are run by Community Health Centres, public health, and various partner agencies.
- Various authorized services may take place at each SCTS.

# Other examples...



- Located in central London.
- Run by Regional HIV/AIDS Connection organization.
- Was a temporary overdose prevention site (UPHNS).
- Had 20 000 visits, reversed 125 overdoses and 700 referrals to mental health, treatment and social services.
- Offers peer-to-peer support.
- Integration of Indigenous-based cultural services (e.g. smudging).
- Location had a battle over zoning, which caused some concerns, however, city supported the move.



# Sounding the alarm

- We have a local and regional opioid crisis.
- We are losing community members to this crisis.
- We need to intensify local work with partners to explore all options.
- We need to explore a north or northeast regional coalition in order to amplify regional concerns and investigate potential strategies and resources.

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