

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

Assistant Deputy Minister
Health System Strategy
and Policy Division

8th Floor, Hepburn Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1R3

Telephone: (416) 327-8929
Facsimile: (416) 327-5109

**Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

Sous-ministre adjoint
Division de la Stratégie et politique du système
de la santé

Édifice Hepburn, 8^e étage
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1R3

Téléphone : 416-327-8929
Télécopieur : 416-327-5109



**MEMORANDUM TO: Provincial Health Care Provider Organizations
Local Health Integration Networks**

**FROM: Vasanthi Srinivasan
Assistant Deputy Minister
Health System Strategy and Policy Division**

**RE: Distribution of Opioid Advice for Healthcare Providers and
Update on Current Initiatives Related to the Expert Working
Group on Narcotic Addiction**

Dear Colleagues,

As you are aware, in early March, Minister Matthews convened an Expert Working Group on Narcotic Addiction to provide advice in response to the removal of OxyContin from the Canadian market. The Expert Working Group has been meeting weekly to monitor the situation and to provide short, medium and long-term advice to the minister to strengthen the existing addiction treatment system in Ontario. A final report containing the Expert Working Group's advice is expected in May.

One of the immediate initiatives recommended by the Expert Working Group was the development and dissemination of opioid advice to health care providers as well as for families, consumers and pregnant women. With assistance from the Centre of Addiction and Mental Health, and guidance from the Expert Working Group on Narcotic Addiction, I am pleased to share the following attachments with you:

1. Opioid Withdrawal
2. Opioid Intoxication
3. Opioid Conversion
4. Opioid Dependence in Pregnant Women

This Opioid Advice series and other resources are also available on the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health website: https://knowledgex.camh.net/opioid_alert. A separate series of Opioid Advice intended for consumers, family members and pregnant women is being developed and will be distributed to you within the next few weeks.

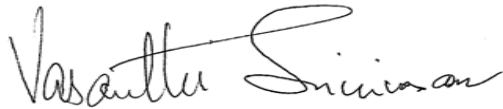
I would appreciate your assistance in the distribution of the Opioid Advice throughout your respective networks to ensure they reach the appropriate healthcare organizations and providers on the ground, as well as the contact information for [ConnexOntario](#) and its Drug and Alcohol Help Line: 1-800-565-8603 for those seeking addiction services.

In addition, and with support from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs through the [Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy](#), Ontario has provided funding for:

- **Surveillance:** The ministry has funded the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Public Health Unit to provide real-time surveillance of opiate overdose and withdrawal in 73 emergency departments across the province.
- **Telemedicine:** The Ontario Telemedicine Network was funded to purchase equipment to expand access to addiction treatment and consultation.
- **Naloxone Overdose Prevention Kit training and supplies:** Funding was provided to the Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program (OHRDP) to purchase naloxone and prepare overdose prevention kits for distribution to needle exchange programs throughout the province. As part of this funding the OHRDP, in partnership with Toronto Public Health, created webinars to train front line workers and peers on the use of the naloxone overdose prevention kits.

Thank you again for your ongoing support as we continue to monitor the situation and develop responses to this issue. I am confident that we will be able to reduce the harms associated with opioid use through all our efforts and that people who require narcotics for pain management will be able to do so safely.

Sincerely,



Vasanthi Srinivasan
Assistant Deputy Minister

Attachments