

# **OPIOID SITUATION REPORT #1**



Grey Bruce Health Unit  
July 2021

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## What is harm reduction?

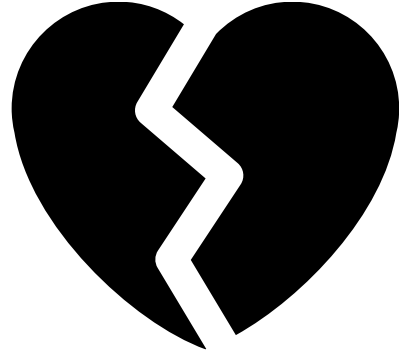
Harm Reduction seeks to reduce the health and social harms associated with addiction and substance use, without necessarily requiring people who use substances to abstain or stop. The harm reduction approach to substance use is evidence-based, and includes programs, services and practices.

Essential to harm reduction is that it provides people who use substances a choice of how they will minimize harms through non-judgmental and non-coercive strategies that enhance skills and knowledge to live safer and healthier lives ([CMHA Ontario](#)).



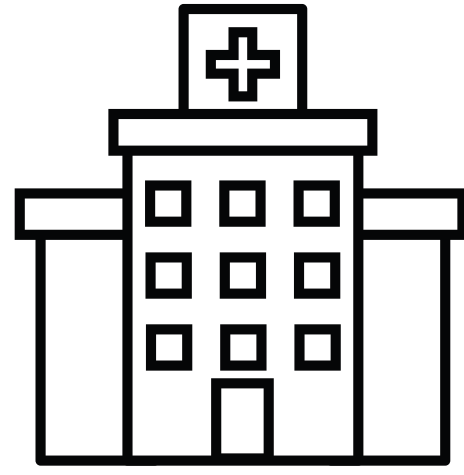
# Local Figures

IN 2020 THERE WERE...



**24**

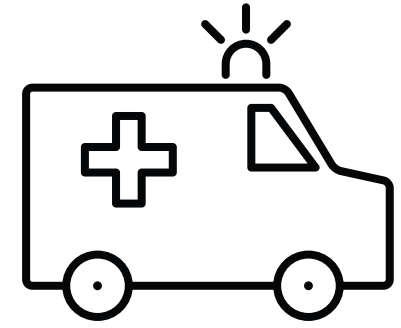
OVERDOSE DEATHS



**107**

EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

FOR SUSPECTED OPIOID OVERDOSES



EMS RESPONDED TO

**80**

SUSPECTED OPIOID OVERDOSES

BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE 2021...

PUBLIC HEALTH,  
CONTRACTED PARTNER SITES,  
AND PHARMACIES  
DISPENSED

**3,198**

NALOXONE KITS



**2,269**

SAFER SUBSTANCE  
USE KITS



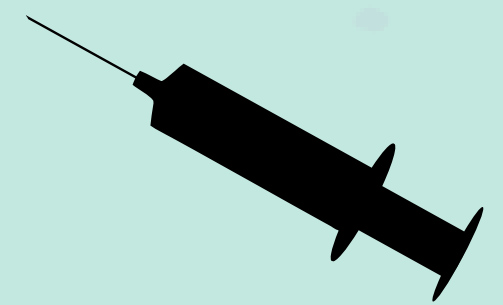
**337**

PERSONAL  
SHARPS DISPOSAL  
CONTAINERS

AND THERE WERE...

**13,830**

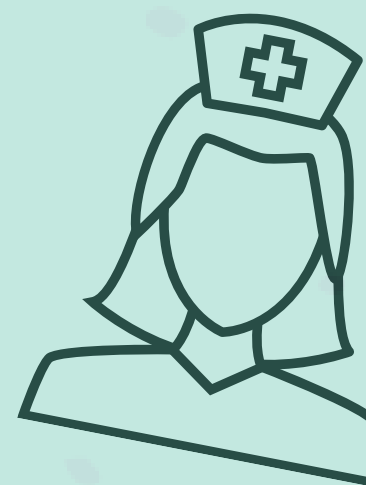
SHARPS  
RETURNED TO  
GBHU FOR SAFE  
DISPOSAL



**19**

REFERRALS MADE

TO ADDICTION, MENTAL HEALTH,  
HARM REDUCTION, PRIMARY CARE,  
AND OTHER SERVICES



# Harm Reduction Services at Grey Bruce Health Unit

## THE NEEDLE SYRINGE PROGRAM (NSP)

- Safe drug use equipment and disposal of used needles
- Containers to safely dispose of drug use equipment
- Overdose prevention and naloxone training
- Referrals to testing and treatment for sexual transmitted and bloodborne infections
- Referrals to other health and social services
- Recruitment of new NSP sites
- Liaison with [15 contracted NSP sites](#) to ensure efficient functioning
- [Educational materials](#) on safe disposal of found needles - see sharps disposal

*NSP is confidential and is offered at the Grey Bruce Health Unit (GBHU) Mon-Fri, 8:30 am to 4 pm, no appointment needed. The NSP is also offered at the 15 additional partner sites.*

## THE NALOXONE PROGRAM

- Training employees of eligible organizations to dispense naloxone to their clients
- Recruitment of new naloxone distribution sites
- Consult with contracted naloxone dispensing organizations to ensure efficient functioning
- Training and supplying Police and Fire Services with naloxone for use as first responders
- Overdose prevention and naloxone training for other interested community organizations

## HARM REDUCTION OUTREACH

- GBHU staff offer NSP services in several communities lacking harm reduction services
- Outreach is offered at food banks and in response to community overdose surges
- Provide public and stakeholder education about the harm reduction philosophy

## OPIOID WORKING GROUP

- The GBHU provides leadership for the Opioid Working Group (OWG) subgroup of the Grey Bruce Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy, bringing together professionals and community members to address the opioid epidemic locally, as outlined in the [Grey Bruce Opioid Response Plan](#).

# What you can do

## LEARN ABOUT THE ISSUE.

To learn what opioids are and about Canada's opioid crisis:

[Canada's opioid crisis \(Fact sheet\) - Canada.ca](#)

[Opioids: What Are They? \(Fact sheet\) - Canada.ca](#)

## BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND TO OPIOID OVERDOSE. GET A NALOXONE KIT.

Naloxone is free, no prescription required at pharmacies and the Grey Bruce Health Unit.

[Opioid Overdoses: What To Do \(fact sheet\) - Canada.ca](#)

[What is an Opioid Overdose? – Peterborough Drug Strategy Video](#)

[Naloxone: Save a Life \(fact sheet\) - Canada.ca](#)

## KEEP PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS SECURE AND MONITOR THE AMOUNT.

If you have a prescription for opioids, keep your medication locked and/or monitor the amount. If medication is missing, someone may be taking it. Return unused or expired medications to the pharmacy for safe disposal.

## LEARN HOW TO LOWER OVERDOSE RISK.

- Avoid using alone. Have a friend who is not using stay with you.
- If using alone, call the National Overdose Response Service at 1-888-688-6677. Someone will stay on the line and call 911 if you do not respond.
- Get Naloxone and have it ready. Naloxone is at pharmacies and the Health Unit.
- Use 1 drug at a time. Avoid mixing. Mixing drugs, including alcohol, increases overdose risk. If mixing, use less of each drug.
- Start with a small test dose and go slow. If you have had a break from using, use less.
- Learn how to recognize an overdose. When in doubt, give Naloxone.
- Plan a safe ride home.
- Call 911 and give Naloxone if you witness or experience an overdose. The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act protects the caller and anyone on the scene from simple drug possession charges.

## PROTECT PEOPLE FROM DISCRIMINATION BY RECOGNIZING STIGMATIZING BEHAVIOUR.

Stigma can have a significant impact on the quality of life of people who use drugs, people who are in recovery, and their loved ones. Take some time to “check yourself” and reflect on your own personal biases when communicating about substance use.

Learn More:

[Changing How We Talk About Substance Use](#)

[Stigma - Why Words Matter](#)

Questions about the report?  
Grey Bruce Health Unit  
1-800-263-3456

Need support but don't  
know where to turn?  
Call 211 or visit [211ontario.ca](http://211ontario.ca)

