



The **Overdose Monitoring, Alert and Response System (OMARS)** is a community-based effort to collect and monitor data related to overdoses, alert individuals who use substances and community partners when data indicates, and to respond to overdose events. OMARS includes 4 key elements:

1. **MONITORING** - We encourage the public and service providers to anonymously report overdoses to improve the detection of tainted or dangerous substances using an online or paper survey. The survey can be found at [www.waterlooregiondrugstrategy.ca/en/home/](http://www.waterlooregiondrugstrategy.ca/en/home/) and [www.omars.ca](http://www.omars.ca).
2. **ALERTS** - To receive and subscribe to overdose alerts issued by the Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy contact the drug strategy coordinator at [lsprague@kdchc.org](mailto:lsprague@kdchc.org) and/or follow **@DrugStrategyWR**.
3. **RESPONSES** – To access free naloxone and other harm reduction supplies contact Sanguen Health Centre at 519-603-0223 or Waterloo Region Public Health 519-575-4400. Select pharmacies across Waterloo region also provide free naloxone for those who are interested and have an Ontario Health Card. To access information about substance use, please visit [www.waterlooregiondrugstrategy.ca/en/home](http://www.waterlooregiondrugstrategy.ca/en/home).
4. **EDUCATION AND TRAINING on naloxone, harm reduction and overdose prevention is available at:**
  - Region of Waterloo Public Health – 519-575-4400
  - Sanguen Health Centre – 519-603-0223

**Signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose include:**

- Slow shallow breathing or not breathing at all
- Deep snoring or gurgling sounds
- Lips, nails, skin are pale or blue
- The person does not wake up to loud noises/shouting or react to pain
- Pupils are very small
- The body is very limp and can have clammy or cold skin

**Naloxone is a medication that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose that is:**

- Available to individuals who currently use or formerly used opioids and their family and friends from the Sanguen Health Centre & Region of Waterloo Public Health **free of charge**.
- Select pharmacies also provide naloxone free of charge with an Ontario Health Card.

\* NALOXONE REVERSES AN OPIOID OVERDOSE TEMPORARILY. It is important to call 911 and continue to assist the victim.

**Background**

In November 2015, the Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy Steering Committee directed staff to develop and implement an overdose monitoring and alert system for Waterloo Region. In January 2016 OMARS issued its first Overdose Alert as a result of a spike in overdoses in Kitchener and Cambridge. The OMARS committee has subsequently worked to strengthen OMARS by improving data sources, ensuring confidential community reporting, providing community forums and beginning to develop a formal response system.

**The Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy** is a community response to problematic substance use in Waterloo Region. The Strategy was developed by the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council through a 26 member task force and partners are implementing recommendations to improve health and make our community more inclusive and safer.

**For more information please contact:**

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- Robert Crossan – Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services – 519-741-7996
- Violet Umanetz - Sanguen Health Centre - 519-574-7222