

The Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy Safe Supply Statement

The need for safe supply is a national public health crisis. Canada's overdose poisoning crisis remains one of the most significant public health challenges of the last century. A safer alternative to the unregulated, toxic, illicit market is urgently needed to prevent overdose deaths and injuries. With the COVID-19 pandemic and on-going imbalances in health equity, the supply of, and demand for, unregulated illicit substances has been impacted. As a result, overdose fatalities have surged across Canada, including Waterloo Region.

Safe supply initiatives prescribe legal, regulated alternatives to individuals relying on the unregulated, toxic market. Research shows that safe supply saves lives and has a positive effect on individuals and communities. The Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy (WRIDS) supports safe supply initiatives as part of a public health approach grounded in equity. The WRIDS encourages all levels of government, regulators, professional colleges, funders, prescribers, service providers, and others with a role in reducing overdose poisoning to enable, support and/or expedite safe supply initiatives.

The WRIDS is a multi-sectoral collaborative that aims to prevent, reduce and/or eliminate substance use and its consequences through integrated efforts in prevention, harm reduction, recovery and rehabilitation, and enforcement and justice.

**Adopted by the WRIDS Steering Committee,
November 16th, 2020**

<https://www.waterlooregiondrugstrategy.ca/>