

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: May 23, 2019

OVERDOSE ALERT SYSTEM

NORTH BAY, ON - On May 27, the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) is launching a real-time Overdose Alert System. The reporting system collects information about overdoses and other negative drug reactions reported by agencies who respond to an overdose or who hear of an overdose through their clients.

Currently there is not a system in place to collect real-time information on opioid related overdoses and negative drug reactions from local organizations and service providers in the Health Unit's catchment area, thus making it difficult to build a detailed understanding of local drug patterns. The launch of the Overdose Alert System will allow agencies, who currently distribute naloxone to their clients, as well as other key stakeholders in our community, to anonymously report overdoses and negative drug incidents through the online system. The Health Unit will examine the data to identify surges or abnormalities that may result in community alert.

"An alert will be shared with community partners, EMS, police services, fire departments, and other stakeholders with the goal that a more comprehensive understanding of overdoses and negative drug reactions will inform service delivery and reduce the number of drug-related harms," explains Auburn Larose, Epidemiologist.

Aggregate data will be shared weekly with all organizations who provide naloxone kits, members of the Parry Sound Drug Strategy, and the North Bay & Area Drug Strategy.

"We're excited to participate in this new data system. The collection of overdose and negative drug reaction data will assist our paramedics by helping us understand what drugs are out there," said Guy Harris from Parry Sound District Emergency Medical Services.

This system was adapted from Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's Opioid Overdose Alert System, which was developed in response to the Opioid Data Challenge led by MaRS Discovery District in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Challenge asked Canadians to identify innovative ways of using data to better understand and respond to the opioid epidemic. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's system was selected as one of five finalists from phase one of the Challenge. Phase two involves extending and testing the system in other communities. Nipissing and Parry Sound Districts is one of the communities selected for this project.

The phase two pilot will run throughout the summer and may develop into a permanent system depending on its success locally.

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