

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: May 13, 2021

Community Sharps Bin Installed in the Town of Parry Sound

PARRY SOUND, ON – The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) is pleased to announce, in partnership with the Town of Parry Sound, a community sharps bin has been installed in Parry Sound. When used sharps are discarded improperly, such as in recycling, garbage or even in a public place, it is often the result of not having a place to properly dispose of them. Providing a place for people to safely discard sharps helps keep the community safer for everyone.

The community sharps bin, located at the corner of Seguin Street and Gibson Street, is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is important that only loose sharps (e.g., needles) or sharps in a puncture-proof container be put into the bin. Garbage and other drug-use equipment, such as wrappers, water and tourniquets, are to be disposed of in the garbage can located near the bin.

Harm reduction services, such as needle exchange and sharps drop off, will still be available at CMHA-MPS, the OATC, the Health Unit and other locations throughout the community.

The Health Unit is mandated by the Ministry of Health to provide harm reduction services, including a needle exchange program. Harm reduction services aim to build relationships with individuals in an effort to restore human dignity.

“Our objective is to work with clients over time with the goal of connecting these individuals with the support they need, when they are ready,” said Chris Bowes, Manager of Healthy Living at the Health Unit.

The needle exchange program aims to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences associated with drug use. The Health Unit follows Best Practice Recommendations for Canadian Harm Reduction Programs. As such, the Health Unit’s needle exchange program distributes sterile needles and drug use supplies to clients in the quantities requested to reduce the risk of contracting blood-borne infections, such as HIV and hepatitis C. Evidence shows that strict exchange policies such as “one-for-one” do not lead to higher return rates of needles, and do not work to prevent the spread of infection.

“The reasons why individuals use substances are complex. Personal, social, economic and environmental factors often influence why someone might use drugs. These factors are called the social determinants of health,” explains Sam Docherty, Community Health Promoter.

Lack of education, unemployment/poor working conditions and lack of adequate housing; social environment (e.g., safe neighborhood, family violence), decreased access to social support and health services; and personal factors such as gender, personal skills (e.g., resiliency), ethnic background and biology/genetics can play a role in problematic substance use and addictions. By addressing the social determinants of health, working with community partners, lobbying the government, and providing services that help to address barriers to health, individuals in our community can overcome these barriers.

By offering services such as, community sharps bins and the needle syringe program, our community will be safer for all.

The Health Unit would like to thank the local community partners and the Town of Parry Sound for their hard work and collaboration to help keep the community safer and meeting people where they are at.

For more information, call the Health Unit at [705-474-1400](tel:705-474-1400) or [1-800-563-2808](tel:1-800-563-2808), or learn more at myhealthunit.ca/communitysharpsbin.

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