

POP-UP OVERDOSE PREVENTION SITE SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHES IN WINNIPEG



WINNIPEG, MB — Over the Sept. long weekend, the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network held their second pop-up overdose prevention site (OPS). Nurses, outreach workers and peer volunteers with experience in drug use joined together to create a space where people could consume drugs in a safer setting.

The pop-up took place on September 4, 5 and 6, running from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. each day.

Over the long weekend, **260 community members** accessed a variety of services at the pop-up. **People who use drugs (PWUD) were able to participate in a supervised consumption area, as well as pick up harm reduction and overdose prevention supplies such as Naloxone, syringes and condoms. Of note, the pop up distributed:**

- **740 meals**
- **131 naloxone kits**
- **5,200 syringes**
- **730 meth pipes**
- **500 menstrual products**
- **130 hand sanitizers / masks**

Community members who came to the site found **low-barrier** and **immediate access** to nurse care, STBBI testing, peer support and outreach workers.

The pop-up was a **community and peer-driven response to alarming rates of overdose** resulting from a poisoned supply. Manitoba is forecasted to see over 400 overdose deaths this

year. This OPS was a response to this and was temporary, volunteer-run, unfunded and executed with the main goal of avoiding the preventable deaths of community members. **Organizers are hopeful that this initiative can springboard the development of permanent, funded, legal safe consumption sites and other overdose prevention measures like safe supply.**

The pop-up is a continuation of the work begun with the *Safer Consumption Spaces: Winnipeg Consultation and Needs Assessment*, published in 2019 by the Safer Consumption Spaces Working Group. The Working Group consulted with service providers and people who use drugs. This OPS follows the recommendations presented in the Provincially-commissioned 2018 report by VIRGO Planning and Evaluation, which called for the expansion of harm reduction services.

“We gave Naloxone kits to 131 people over the weekend, and 80% of those said that they had previously administered Naloxone and needed a replacement kit,” said Jonny Mexico, Winnipeg Network Coordinator for the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network. “This demonstrates that overdose prevention interventions are very needed.”

The Manitoba Harm Reduction Network is a coalition of organizations, community members and people who use drugs.

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DOCUMENTS:

Safer Consumption Spaces: Winnipeg Consultation and Needs Report

Available online at <https://www.sunshinehousewpg.org/publications>