

April 29, 2022

Dear harm reduction stakeholders,

We hope this notice finds you well. We understand that it has been an extremely challenging time for your organizations responding to the COVID pandemic and ongoing opioid overdose crisis, and we thank you for your ongoing delivery of harm reduction services across Ontario.

We are writing to inform you that as part of our ongoing data quality improvement practices to strengthen data collection using the Ontario Harm Reduction Database (ONHRDB) and reduce reporting burden, there will be updates to the database during the fiscal year. The ministry will be working together with its partner, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, to implement these changes successfully with the least disruptions for your work.

Please share this communication with your contracted core NEP (if applicable) and any other harm reduction stakeholders that use the database.

### **Benefits of the Changes**

Benefits of these changes include:

- **Improved data quality:** Consistent data collection across all sites in the PHU catchment area and across the province
- **Improved data collection & reporting:** All ministry required reporting elements will be included on the site set-up for all core database users

### **Fiscal Year 2022-23 Changes to the Harm Reduction Database & Impacts on Your Programs**

- 1) Standardizing the names of all provincial harm reduction supplies available from the Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program (OHRDP) across all core database users (i.e., core Needle Exchange Program, ministry-funded harm reduction outreach programs and hep C outreach workers)
  - Refer to Appendix A for the upcoming standardized list of provincial harm reduction supplies that will be added to the database.
- 2) Adding all provincial harm reduction supplies available from OHRDP to the corresponding transaction screens across all sites.
  - Removal of these items from the transaction screen will not be permitted.
  - If you are not currently required to track and report distribution of the full range of harm reduction supplies to the ministry, you do not need to change your data entry practices or reporting.

- Your organization's ability to define and create specific harm reduction kits and determine the needles/syringes to meet local community needs will not be impacted. However, you will no longer be able to change the names of the individual harm reduction supplies from OHRDP, as these will be standardized across all sites.

- 3) Aligning the database site configurations with ministry reporting requirements (e.g., adding all the minimum data elements that sites are required to report to the ministry on all corresponding database screens)

More information about the changes and guidance to assist with data entry will be provided before any changes are implemented. Additional supports will be provided during the change process.

### **Ministry Reports**

Ministry reporting requirements remain the same (e.g., NEP report and harm reduction outreach program report). Any changes regarding the Ontario Naloxone Program (ONP) quarterly reporting will be communicated by the ONP and updated in the database, as per regular practice.

Should you have any questions, contact the following:

**Needle Exchange Program**

[AddictionandSubstances@ontario.ca](mailto:AddictionandSubstances@ontario.ca)

**Harm Reduction Outreach Programs & Hep C teams**

[AIDSHEPCPrograms@ontario.ca](mailto:AIDSHEPCPrograms@ontario.ca)

Sincerely,

Blaine Bouchard  
Manager,  
Addiction and Substances Policy and Programs Unit  
Health Protection and Surveillance Policy and  
Programs Branch  
Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public  
Health Division  
Ministry of Health

Joanne Lush  
Manager,  
AIDS & Hepatitis C Programs Unit  
Provincial Programs Branch  
Hospitals and Capital Division  
Ministry of Health

**Appendix A: List of Standardized Harm Reduction Supplies Available from OHRDP (shown on transaction screens)**

- 1) Alcohol Swab
- 2) Bowl Pipe
- 3) BZK Wipe
- 4) Cooker - Spoon
- 5) Cooker - Stericup
- 6) Cooker - One-Use
- 7) Blister Packed Filters
- 8) Foil
- 9) Straight Stem
- 10) Tubing - Bowl Pipe
- 11) Tubing - Straight Stem
- 12) Baggie - Green, Resealable
- 13) Baggie - Clear, Resealable
- 14) Baggie - Blue, Resealable
- 15) Baggie - Orange, Resealable
- 16) Baggie - Black, Resealable
- 17) Baggie - Black, Ties
- 18) Baggie - Blue, Ties
- 19) Baggie - Green, Ties
- 20) Baggie - Yellow, Ties
- 21) Screens (Impact 1.0 - Blue)
- 22) Screens (Impact 2.0 - Orange)
- 23) Straw - Blue
- 24) Straw - Yellow
- 25) Straw - Green
- 26) Straw - Orange
- 27) Tourniquet
- 28) Vitamin C
- 29) Sterile Water
- 30) Push Stick