

## The New Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy

The Government of Canada is committed to a comprehensive, collaborative, compassionate and evidence-based approach to drug policy, which uses a public health approach when considering and addressing drug issues. To that end, on December 12, 2016, the Minister of Health announced an updated drug strategy for Canada: The Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy (CDSS) will replace the current National Anti-Drug Strategy.

Canada has had successive drug strategies in place since 1987 that have aimed to balance public health and public safety objectives through the key pillars of prevention, treatment, enforcement and, at times, harm reduction. In 2006, under the National Anti-Drug Strategy (NADS), the harm reduction pillar was removed. The NADS did not reflect this government's approach.

The new drug strategy will be led by the Minister of Health. The CDSS will formally restore harm reduction as a key pillar of Canada's drug strategy alongside the existing pillars of prevention, treatment and enforcement. The inclusion of harm reduction as a pillar of Canada's drug policy will better enable the Government to address the current opioid crisis, and to work toward preventing the emergence of new crises. With this change, harm reduction-focused policies—such as support for properly established and maintained supervised consumption sites, and increased access to naloxone—will now be a formal part of the Government's strategy.

The Government is committed to ensuring that its policies under the CDSS are based on a strong foundation of evidence, including data related to harm reduction policies, program and interventions. This will enable the Government to better identify trends, target interventions, monitor impacts and support evidence-based decisions.

The launch of the new CDSS is an important step in ensuring that Canada's drug policies are well balanced, appropriately health-focused and evidence-based to better protect and promote the health and safety of Canadians.

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