Conducting a Needs Assessment in Ontario to Effectively Address the City's Opioid Epidemic

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BACKGROUND

Site: City of Ontario Community Life and Culture Agency

Preceptor: Natalie Komuro, Continuum of Care Director

Project: Conducting a needs assessment around opioid use disorder (OUD) in Ontario and developing program and budgetary guidance for National Opioid Settlement Fund use in the city.

Project Rationale: One opioid overdose occurs in Ontario nearly every day. The yearly number of opioid-related fatalities are increasing steadily. Recent opioid settlements have generated a windfall for many cities to respond to the harm caused by these drugs. Opioid use disorder prevention and harm reduction initiatives are highly effective, but they must be tailored to the needs of a city.

METHODS

1) Literature and National Opioid Settlement review.
2) City survey to ascertain how other cities in San Bernardino County are responding to the opioid epidemic.
3) Reviewing FD and EMS opioid overdose data.
4) Conduct focus groups in coalition with Social Impact Artists to understand the gaps in Ontario's current opioid response.
5) Conduct stakeholder surveys to understand organizational impacts of the opioid epidemic.
6) Final budgetary and program recommendations

RESULTS

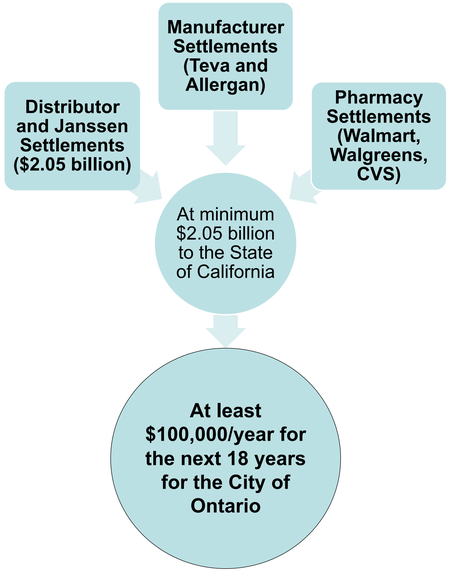

Figure 1. Current National Opioid Settlement Scheme for California and Ontario

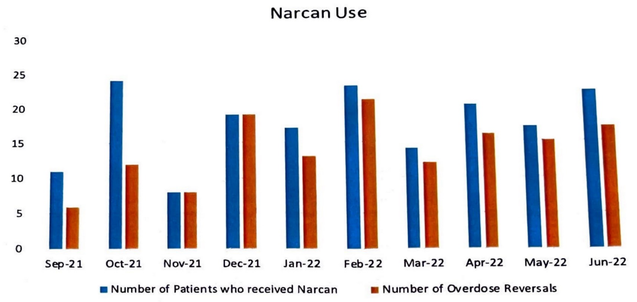

Figure 2. Image from Ontario Emergency Services. Success rate of Narcan use on overdose calls in Ontario.

DISCUSSION

Current state of opioid epidemic in Ontario: Overdose fatalities are increasing steadily, and urgent response is necessary. Cost and treatment center availability are two barriers to OUD treatment. Parents are concerned about their children being exposed to opioids.

Future directions for Ontario: Proliferation of the Fire Department's Narcan leave-behind program. Support from the Continuum of Care to connect people with OUD to support, resources, and treatment. Initiate youth prevention programs.

CONCLUSION

Future Directions: This final report will give way to more research, program development, and a better opioid response in Ontario.

My takeaways: This experience has taught me many new skills from strategizing data collection on a city level, to the importance of building community partnerships for tailored policy development and applying the vast range of social determinants of health to the opioid epidemic in Ontario.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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