

Overdose prevention centre: a joint effort for the benefit of users and the community

Rouyn-Noranda, March 17, 2021 – The Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de l'Abitibi- Témiscamingue is proud to announce the opening of an overdose prevention centre in Val-d'Or. The pilot project is part of a harm reduction approach. The Abitibi-Témiscamingue region is one of four regions in Quebec to roll out this service.

“The centre will open temporarily until September 2021 to supervise and assist users during the opioid crisis, which is partly caused by drugs that are sweetened with fentanyl or other potent opioids. The centre’s mission is to save lives by intervening quickly in the event of overdoses,” explains Ms. Christine Francoeur, head of the addictions service.

A proven approach

The prevention centre allows people suffering from addiction to use drugs under the supervision of healthcare workers. Dr. Venne, a family physician in Val-d'Or, says that “the staff at the centre is capable of quickly recognizing the signs of an overdose and administering naloxone—the opioid antidote—pending the arrival of emergency services.”

Public health authorities report that supervised consumption services have proven successful in various communities. These facilities reduce the risk of fatal overdose and the transmission of infections such as hepatitis C and HIV. “In the current crisis, this preventive measure will provide a safe place for people suffering from addiction and will help raise awareness, educate and screen users,” states Dr. Omobola Sobanjo, medical adviser to the region’s public health authority.

Lastly, “all of the partners involved in the homeless community believe that the overdose prevention centre will address a need among vulnerable users. This centre is much more than a drug consumption site; it is a place where a variety of healthcare professionals are present to assist users,” explains social worker Antoine St-Germain.

Lastly, let us remind you that the CISSS de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue offers addiction services: [Drugs, Alcohol and Pathological Gambling - CISSS – ABITIBI TÉMISCAMINGUE \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)

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