

Minister's Opioid Emergency Response Commission

Record of Discussion: January 29-30, 2018

1. Welcome and Personal Reflections

The Commission started their meeting by reflecting on members' experiences with the opioid crisis.

2. Review of the Past Record of Decision and Agenda and Purpose of the Day

The Commission reviewed the agenda and purpose for the two-day meeting. The Members had an opportunity to update their conflict of interest declarations.

3. Co-Chair Updates

Dr. Klein provided an overview of the Alberta Interim surveillance report released earlier in the month, as well as the Alberta Q4 surveillance report, set to be released in mid-February. An update on the progress of the ministerial orders regarding naloxone administration was provided, as was information regarding cross-jurisdictional pilot projects related to the opioid crisis. Members were additionally presented with details related to the public service announcement from Alberta Health Services (AHS) regarding incomplete naloxone kits.

Dr. Hyshka provided an update on her meeting with the Minister of Finance. Details regarding the City of Edmonton Supervised Consumption Service Liaison Committee were provided, as were those related to the development of guidance documents on acute care and management of substance use.

Members were provided the opportunity to report on progress in each of their respective areas related to ongoing opioid crisis response efforts.

4. Overview of SCS Approach in Alberta

Alberta Health provided an outline for a SCS Provincial Guidance Document. The Commission provided suggestions around structure and language, and indicated support around the general outline.

Next steps: Members requested Alberta Health continue the development of formal provincial guidance for supervised consumption services, and a provincial process to support the establishment and operation of overdose prevention sites. The Commission further suggested that relevant stakeholders be engaged, as appropriate, in the development and implementation of these documents.

5. Calgary Proposal for SCS

The Commission heard a proposal from the Calgary Coalition on Supervised Consumption for a mobile supervised consumption service, operated by HIV Community Link.

Minister's Opioid Emergency Response Commission Record of Discussion: January 29-30, 2018

6. Medicine Hat Proposal for SCS

The Commission heard a proposal from the Medicine Hat Coalition on Supervised Consumption for an integrated supervised consumption service, housed within HIV Community Link.

7. Grande Prairie Proposal for SCS

The Commission heard a proposal from HIV North Society for a mobile supervised consumption service, operated by HIV North Society, Grande Prairie.

8. Fort McMurray Proposal for SCS

The Commission heard a presentation from HIV North Society regarding the feasibility of supervised consumption services in Fort McMurray. HIV North Society refrained from proposing a service for this location at this time due to current challenges.

9. Red Deer Proposal for SCS

The Commission heard a proposal from the Red Deer Coalition on the Opioid Crisis for a fixed site for supervised consumption service, housed within the Turning Point Society of Central Alberta.

10. SCS Discussions & Decisions

Members were provided the opportunity to express their thoughts on the proposals for supervised consumption services. A discussion was facilitated to determine whether to support each of the provided proposals.

The Commission formulated the following **recommendations**, for consideration by the Minister:

- HIV Community Link apply for a federal exemption for a mobile supervised consumption service in the City of Calgary, as one strategy to address the high number of fentanyl-related overdose fatalities experienced in that community.
- HIV Community Link apply for a federal exemption for an integrated supervised consumption service in the City of Medicine Hat, as a mechanism to: enhance harm reduction service options; provide a safe alternative for people who use drugs; and respond to the high rate of opioid related harms.
- HIV North Society apply for a federal exemption for a mobile supervised consumption service in the City of Grande Prairie, as one strategy to address the high rate of fentanyl-related overdose fatalities experienced in that community.
- Turning Point Society Central Alberta apply for a federal exemption to operate supervised consumption service in the City of Red Deer, as one strategy to address the high rate of fentanyl-related opioid overdose fatalities experienced in that community.

Next Steps: The Commission tasked Alberta Health with following up with each of the organizations whose proposals were accepted by the Commission. Once federal exemptions are obtained by each of the organizations, the Commission suggests that funds be available for start-up costs and ongoing operational funding for the respective services.

Minister's Opioid Emergency Response Commission Record of Discussion: January 29-30, 2018

11. Update on Recommendations

The Commission heard a presentation from Alberta Health on the opioid response budget, the status of the grants to implement Commission recommendations, as well as additional opportunities. Members discussed and provided feedback regarding the proposed additional opportunities, including recommending an increase in funding, up to \$1 million, for the community-based awareness grants.

The Commission formulated the following **recommendation**, for consideration by the Minister:

- The Minister allocate additional funding to the communications strategy presented in October, 2017 due to the high number of quality applications that were initially received. The Commission recommends that the additional funding be allocated to community-based awareness initiatives developed in response to the Alberta Health December 2017 call for proposals on the opioid response.

Next steps: The Commission suggested Alberta Health, alongside those with lived experiences, identify further proposals from the December call to implement awareness initiatives. Additionally, the Commission suggested Alberta Health engage with relevant Indigenous groups and relevant stakeholders to identify more pointed options for allocating the additional recommended funds. Alberta Health will then present these options to the Commission at an interim meeting in order to attain approval to move forward.

12. Supervised Injectable Opioid Agonist Therapy

The Commission was presented an updated proposal by AHS for supervised injection opioid agonist therapy. Members indicated general support for the updated proposal.

Next steps: The Commission suggested Alberta Health to move forward and conduct further due diligence during the grant development process.

13. Alberta Labour

Alberta Labour provided a presentation to the Commission outlining their position on personal protective equipment (PPE) and potential fentanyl exposure, as well as some barriers, challenges, and opportunities identified within this scope. Alberta Labour additionally provided further information on how the Commission's recommendations regarding PPE and remediation would affect the Occupational Health and Safety division of their Ministry.

14. Enforcement & Supply Control

The Commission heard a presentation from the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) regarding enforcement and supply control, as well as current challenges faced, and additional opportunities and next steps for JSG's response to the opioid crisis.

Minister's Opioid Emergency Response Commission Record of Discussion: January 29-30, 2018

The Commission formulated the following **recommendation**, for consideration by the Minister:

- The Minister endorse the continued support from the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General, for the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams (ALERT) and joint force operations in Alberta.
- The Minister endorse efforts from the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General to develop evidence-based, standardized approaches for drug treatment court (DTC) programs in Alberta. This will facilitate future expansion of existing DTCs, and aid in the development of additional programs within interested communities.
- The Minister support the department in working with Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General to explore opportunities for pre-charge and post-charge diversion for individuals with substance use issues, with specific focus on the expansion of Case Development Groups and Situation Tables as one tool to address the opioid crisis.
- The Minister, in conjunction with the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, send a letter to Health Canada in support of additional resources for the Drug Analysis Service to expedite access to results from drug checking.

Next steps: The Commission appointed Alberta Health to work with their colleagues at JSG to implement the recommendations made. This includes drafting a letter alongside JSG to Health Canada regarding the Drug Analysis Service resource pressures.

15. Addiction & Mental Health Protection

The Addiction & Mental Health branch of Alberta Health provided a presentation to the Commission regarding addiction and mental health treatment services.

The Commission formulated the following **recommendation**, for consideration by the Minister:

- The Minister support the department to expedite the development of legislation to strengthen the Government's capacity to ensure safe, quality care and consumer protection for Alberta's addiction and mental health facilities, services and care providers. The Commission endorses that legislation is required to enable Government to employ mechanisms to address safety, quality and consumer protection issues as they arise.

Next steps: The division of Addiction & Mental Health within Alberta Health will continue drafting legislation for their Act.

16. Conclusions and Next Steps

The next Commission meeting will be held March 5-6, 2018.