

Minister's Opioid Emergency Response Commission

Record of Discussion: May 7, 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 one-day meeting. Members had an opportunity to update their conflict of interest declarations.

3. Co-Chair Updates

Dr. Grimsrud provided additional information on the Federal Budget 2018 and an update on supervised consumption services (SCS) in Lethbridge and Calgary. Information on opioid agonist therapy in correctional facilities in Alberta was also shared.

Dr. Hyshka provided an overview of information shared at a national opioid response information exchange event. Updates regarding the SCS in Edmonton were provided, as was information on cross jurisdictional discussions around safe supply.

4. Member Roundtable

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

5. Update on Recommendations

Alberta Health provided an update on the implementation status of the approved Commission recommendations to date.

6. Overdose Prevention Site Policy Update

Alberta Health provided an update on the revised policy options and process for implementing an overdose prevention site program in Alberta.

7. Naloxone Program

Alberta Health Services' (AHS) naloxone program evaluation group provided an overview of the naloxone program in Alberta, the work the group has done to date, and their corresponding evaluative findings. Additionally, Alberta Health provided an overview of the scope of the naloxone program.

Next steps: The Commission requested AHS and Alberta Health explore opportunities for developing and incorporating alternative messaging with regards to the naloxone program.

8. Terminology

Members participated in a roundtable discussion regarding non-stigmatizing terminology.

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

- The Commission recommends the Minister support the department in engaging in conversations within the Ministry and amongst relevant stakeholders, including Alberta Health Services and professional regulatory bodies, to harmonize terminology and promote the use of non-stigmatizing, person-centered language as it relates to those who use substances.

Next steps: Alberta Health will begin exploring opportunities to facilitate conversations with relevant internal and external stakeholders.

9. British Columbia Coroners Report Overview

Alberta Health provided the Commission with an overview of the “BC Coroners Service Death Review Panel: A Review of Illicit Drug Overdoses”, and the associated review panel findings comparative to Alberta surveillance.

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

- The Commission recommends the Minister support the department in engaging in conversations with provincial and federal prosecution services and judges to facilitate knowledge transfer related to substance use language and terminology, and evidence-based treatment options for people who use substances.
- The Commission recommends the Minister support the department in working with the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) to facilitate Alberta Health access to provincial corrections specific data, as it relates to those who use substances. In addition, the Commission recommends that the Minister support the department in facilitating the work of JSG and Alberta Health Services to expand opioid agonist therapy initiation and maintenance within provincial correctional facilities, and to support post-discharge community transitions.

Next steps: The Commission requested Alberta Health and the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General facilitate a coordinated meeting with relevant stakeholders to initiate the conversations necessary to implement the recommendations made.

10. Minister's Opioid Emergency Response Commission Wrap Up

With the first year of the Commission coming to a close, the Commission reviewed all of their recommendations and actions to date. Members then participated in a group discussion on what all was achieved and learned by the group, and what additional areas could be explored in the future.

11. Conclusions and Next Steps

The next Commission meeting will be held June 5, 2018.