Harm Reduction

- Harm reduction strategies focus on reducing the harmful consequences of drug use and other risky behaviours that affect a person’s health.

- Harm reduction strategies recognize the difficulties associated with drug addiction and that avoiding drugs may not be realistic for everyone.

- These strategies are community-based, user-driven, non-judgmental, and address the way individuals may be isolated or marginalized.

- Needle syringe programs are helpful in modifying many risk related practices of injection drug use (for example reusing and sharing needles). These programs also reduce the spread of blood-borne illnesses such as HIV and hepatitis C.

Why Now?

- Hepatitis C has been identified as the most burdensome infectious disease in Ontario in terms of morbidity and mortality.

- Rates of hepatitis C are higher in H-N than the province and have been for over 5 years.

- Self-reported illicit drug use rates are higher in H-N when compared to the rest of Ontario.

- H-N had the highest percentage of individuals taking high strength prescription opioids when compared to all other municipalities in Ontario in 2015.

- Drug overdoses in 2016 in Norfolk quadrupled in number from January to December comparatively.

Successes to Date and Next Steps

- The HNHU’s Harm Reduction Program plays a vital role in our community to help address these issues.

- By continuing to provide sterile drug using equipment, we help reduce the transmission of hepatitis C, a significant issue in the community.

- With the coming availability of Naloxone (the opioid overdose reversal medication) to our harm reduction program, we will be better equipped to ensure a safer, healthier community.

- We will continue to work closely with many community agencies, including Social Services, our local LHIN, OPP, Canadian Mental Health Association, Centre for Addictions and Mental Services, local methadone clinics, EMS, area hospitals, probation and parole, Holmes House, Sprucedale and the Grand Erie District School Board.

- We will continue to address this crisis that has already affected many people across Haldimand and Norfolk.

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Please see reverse for more detailed stats.