
MEMORANDUM

CWCD 2021-190

Subject: Opioid Work Update

Date: September 3, 2021

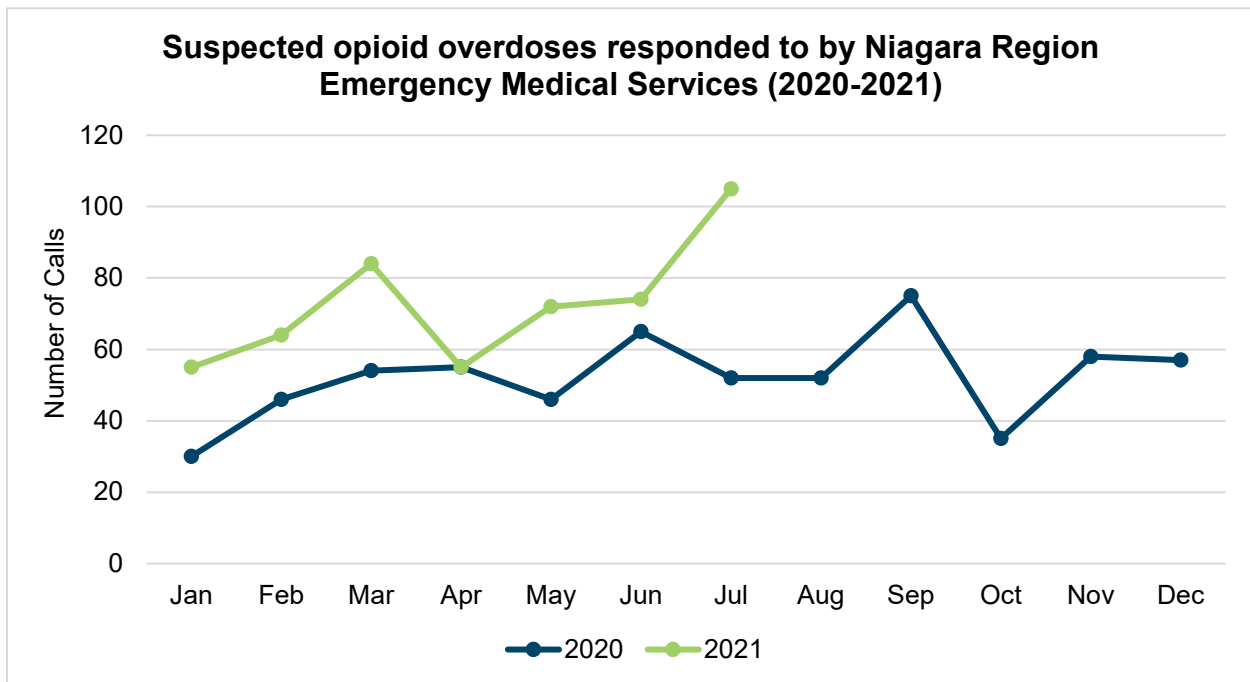
To: Regional Council / Board of Health

From: Dr. Feller, Associate Medical Officer of Health

Please be advised of the following important updates around the opioid overdose crisis.

1. [Overdose Prevention and Education Network of Niagara](https://211centralsouth.ca/niagara/openn/) (OPENN) Updates: (<https://211centralsouth.ca/niagara/openn/>)
 - a) Adverse Reaction Advisories are now distributed through Niagara 211 to all member organizations (1500 – 2000 recipients). Year-to-date there have been 8 advisories issued; in 2020 there were a total of 8 advisories issued.
 - b) OPENN's new [webpage](https://211centralsouth.ca/niagara/openn/) (<https://211centralsouth.ca/niagara/openn/>) includes links to community resources, harm reduction information, educational opportunities, and OPENN's [Niagara's Substance Use Prevention Strategy](https://niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/resources-publications/openn-substance-use-prevention-strategy/) (<https://niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/resources-publications/openn-substance-use-prevention-strategy/>).
 - c) OPENN will provide an accredited educational session for all health providers on safer supply in September 2021 in order to help residents avoid the toxic street supply and have access to a health care provider setting that can offer prescribed pharmaceutical opioids.
 - d) OPENN is working with media to request removal of paywalls for articles related to the opioid crisis and harm reduction.
2. Niagara EMS staff continue to provide proactive, preventive services including street outreach services (community paramedics targeting under-housed community members) and daily onsite staffing at the Consumption and Treatment Site (CTS).
3. There are 35 on-boarded community organizations / programs with the Ontario Naloxone Program (ONP) across the region. Currently two additional organizations are in process for ONP on – boarding.
4. Opioid deaths unfortunately met projections as discussed previously, given the impacts of the COVID pandemic.

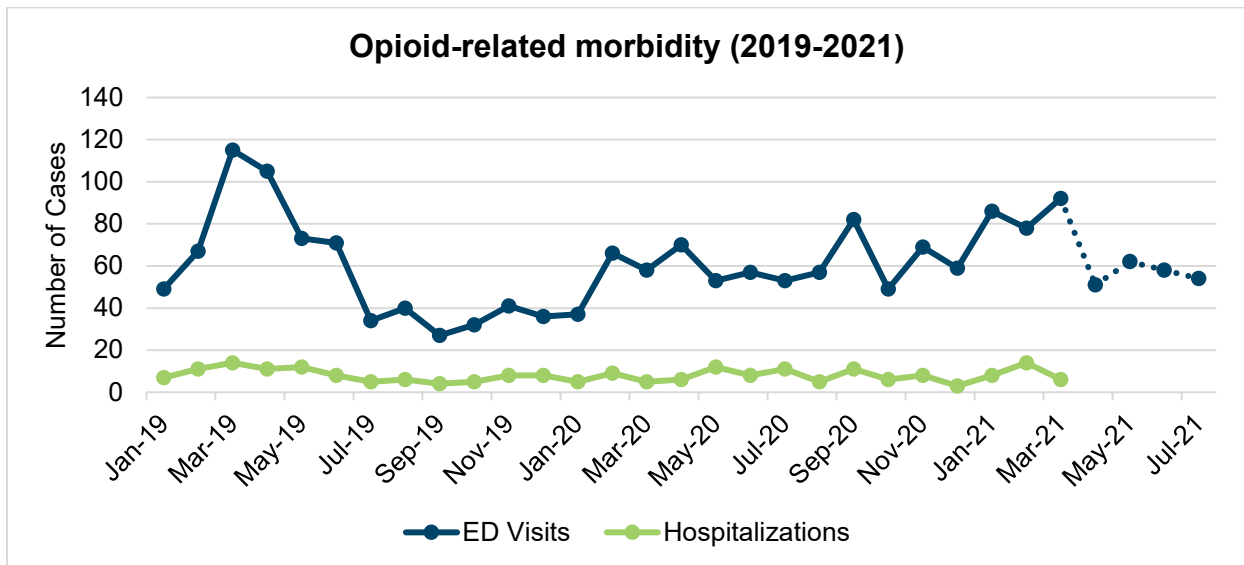
5. The Community Safety Wellbeing Plan seeks to align with OPENN's strategy through cross-sector collaboration and encouraging an upstream/prevention-based approach to integrated planning.
6. For this report, we have included some **preliminary** data (in broken lines) in addition to the data found on the website. A summary of opioid-related population health outcome and naloxone distribution data available to date follows.



Data source: Niagara Emergency Medical Services, 2020-2021.

EMS calls for Suspected Opioid Overdoses

- From January to July 2021, there were 509 suspected opioid overdoses responded to by EMS
 - This is an average of 73 calls per month
 - In July, there were 105 EMS calls alone. This is the highest number of calls made in a single month
- In 2020, there were 625 suspected opioid overdoses responded to by EMS
 - This is an average of 52 calls per month

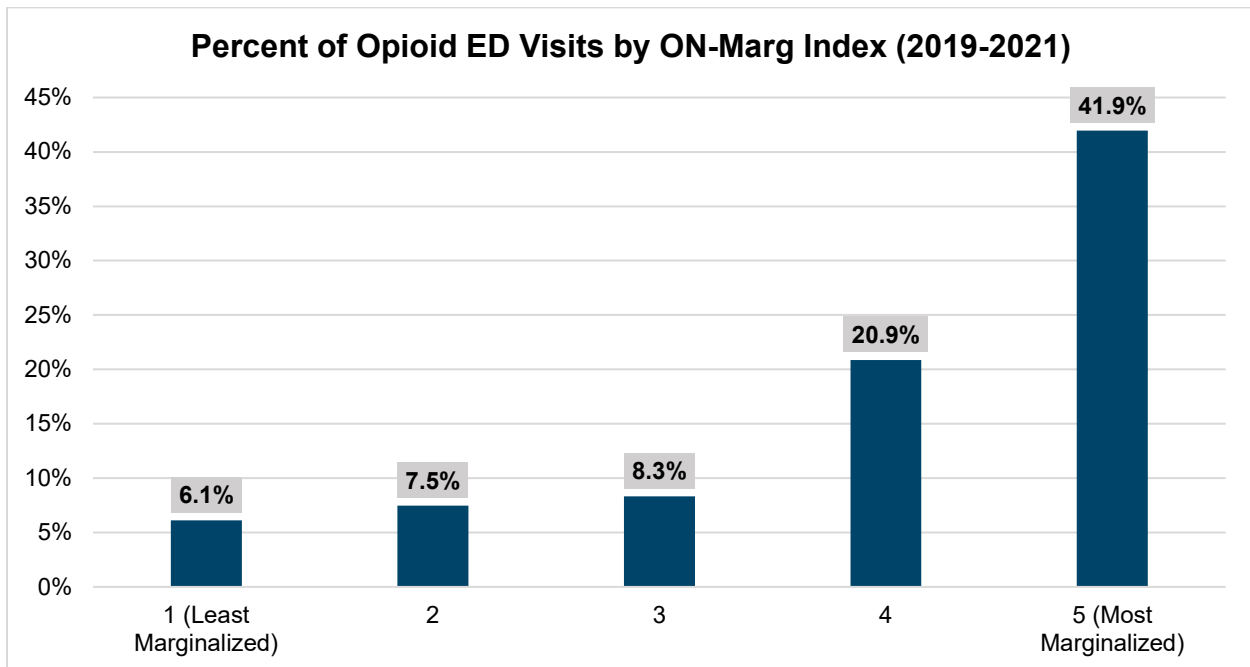


Data source: National Ambulatory Care Reporting System, 2019-2021; Canadian Institute for Health, 2021; Discharge Abstract Database, 2019-2021.

Notes: ED visit data for April to July 2021 is considered preliminary and subject to change

Emergency Department (ED) Visits and Hospitalizations due to Opioid Poisoning

- From **January to July 2021**, there were 481 emergency department (ED) visits
 - This is an average of 69 ED visits per month
- From **January to March 2021**, there were 28 hospitalizations
 - This is an average of 9 hospitalizations per month
- **In 2020**, there were a total of 710 ED visits and 89 hospitalizations
 - This is an average of 60 ED visits and 7 hospitalizations per month
- **In 2019**, there were a total of 690 ED visits and 99 hospitalizations
 - This is an average of 58 ED visits and 8 hospitalizations per month



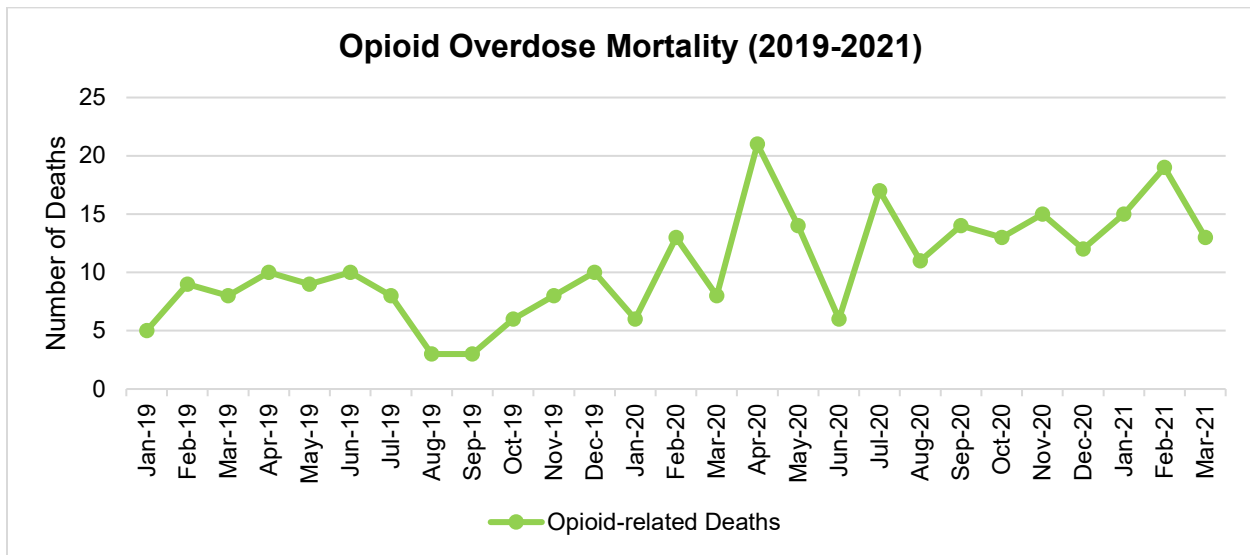
Data source: Integrated Decision Support Hamilton Health Sciences (IDS), 2019-2021

Notes: Data for 2021 only includes ED visits from January-June 2021

Emergency Department Visits by ON-Marg Index (Material Deprivation)

Ontario Marginalization Index or otherwise known as “ON-Marg” is used to understand levels of marginalization across different levels of geography. Marginalization can be assessed in quintiles with Quintile 1 indicating the least level of marginalization while Quintile 5 indicating the most level of marginalization. Marginalization can be measured different ways; a common method includes measuring something called “material deprivation”. This measure is related to poverty and the inability for individuals to access and attain basic material needs. There has been a consistent trend indicating that many individuals who visit the ED for opioid poisonings live in areas that have more poverty.

- From 2019 to June 2021:
 - 41.9% of individuals who visit the ED live in the most impoverished areas
 - The most impoverished areas (Quintile 5) had 663 additional ED visits compared to Quintile 1 (least impoverished)
 - The most impoverished areas (Quintile 5) had 6.9 times the number of ED visits compared to Quintile 1 (least impoverished)

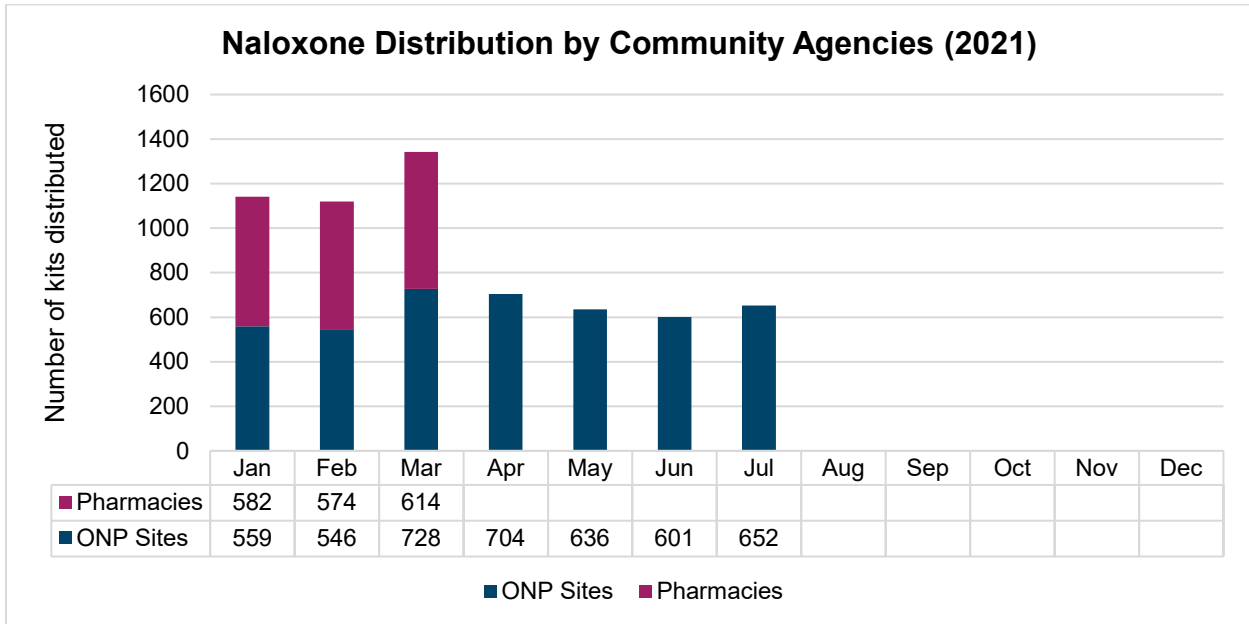


Data Source: Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, 2019-2021.

Notes: Data for April to July 2021 is considered preliminary and subject to change; opioid-related death data past March 2021 is currently unavailable.

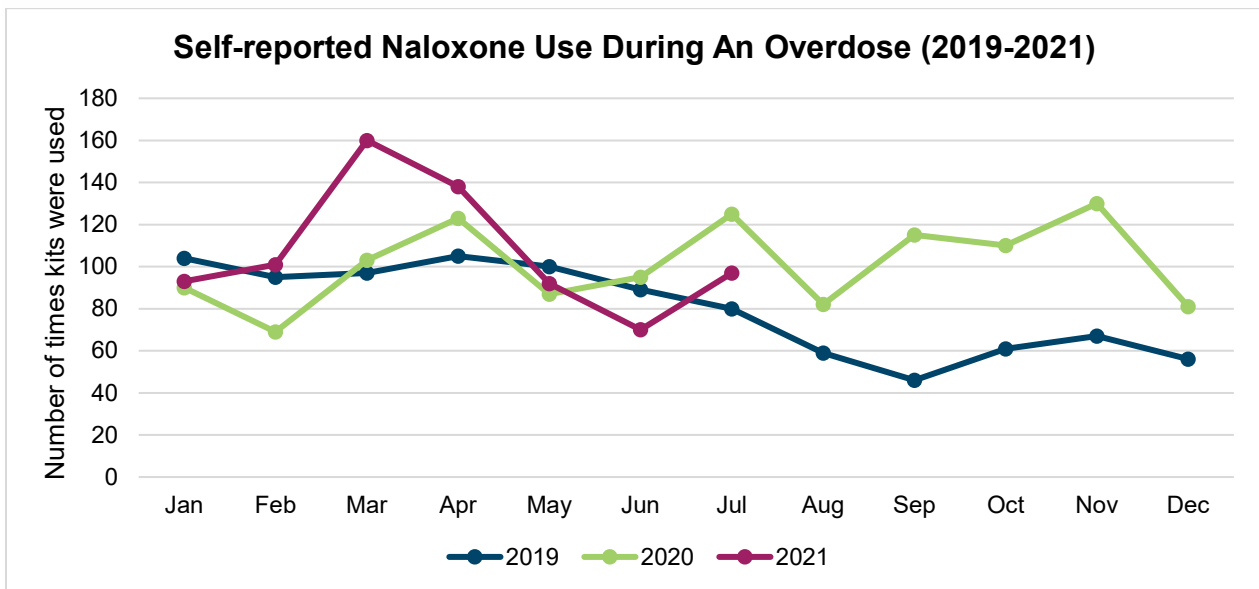
Confirmed Opioid Mortality

- From **January to March 2021**, there were 47 confirmed opioid overdose deaths. This is an average of 16 deaths per month
 - Fentanyl was the most common type of opioid present at the time of death (present in 94% of deaths), followed by methadone (present in 13% of deaths)
- There is some preliminary data to suggest opioid overdose deaths will continue to increase over the next few months
- **In 2020**, there were 150 deaths. This is an average of 13 deaths per month
 - Fentanyl was the most common type of opioid present at the time of death (83% of deaths), followed by methadone (15% of deaths)
 - This the highest number of deaths recorded in a year
- **In 2019**, there were 90 deaths. This is an average of 8 deaths per month
 - Fentanyl was the most common type of opioid present at the time of death (81% of deaths), followed by carfentanil (46% of deaths)



Data source: Niagara Region Public Health, 2021.

Notes: Pharmacy data for April-July 2021 is currently unavailable; data for naloxone distribution from Canadian Addiction Treatment Centres is unavailable



Data source: Niagara Region Public Health, 2019-2021.

- From January to July 2021, there were over 6,100 naloxone kits distributed in Niagara.
 - Naloxone kits were reportedly used over 750 times during this period
- In 2020, there were over 14,700 naloxone kits distributed in Niagara.
 - Naloxone kits were reportedly used over 1,200 times during this period
- In 2019, there were over 13,550 naloxone kits distributed in Niagara.

- Naloxone kits were reportedly used over 950 times during this period

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Andrea Feller, MD, MS, FAAP, FACPM
Associate Medical Officer of Health