

# (Un)Safe

The unregulated drug markets remain toxic, unsafe, and unhealthy.

Safe supply initiatives provide pharmaceutical equivalents, such as opioids and stimulants, for people using unregulated drugs to prevent and/or reduce individual and community harms, including death, due to the acquisition, consumption, and criminalization of unregulated drugs.



## UnSafe Supply

Prohibited, unregulated drugs



## Safer Supply

Legal, regulated drugs

### PRODUCER - DISTRIBUTOR



Unknown manufacturers and distributors

Licensed pharmaceutical manufacturer; distribution via regulated medical professionals



### QUALITY CONTROL



Unknown drug composition (overdose poisoning risk)

Known composition (no overdose poisoning risk when used as prescribed)

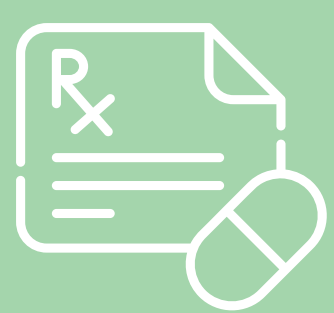


### CONSUMER ELIGIBILITY



No restrictions

Currently by prescription



### PURCHASING EXPERIENCE



Unpredictable  
Vulnerable to victimization  
Higher risk of withdrawal

Consistent  
Low risk of victimization  
Little risk of withdrawal



### AVERAGE DRUG COST

**\$120 / DAY**  
(\$43,800 / year)

**\$21 / DAY\***  
(\$7,665 / year)

### PAYMENT OPTIONS



Personal funds

Drug benefits plans or personal funds



### HEALTH CARE ENGAGEMENT



Barriers to diagnosis, treatment, and 'wraparound' services

Facilitates prevention, treatment, and 'wraparound' opportunities



### COMMUNITY IMPACTS



Crime and victimization, 'nuisance' and 'litter' complaints

Less crime and victimization, reduced 'nuisance' and 'litter' complaints



### SERVICE PROVIDER IMPACTS



Expenses to first responders, health-medical systems, enforcement-justice systems, service providers, funders  
Traumatized direct service staff and volunteers

Less expensive

Reduced burden on 'downstream' service providers



### HOMELESSNESS



Barrier to stable housing

Enables housing stability

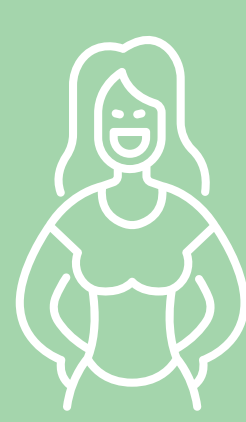


### PSYCHO-SOCIAL IMPACTS ON CONSUMERS

Stigma and discrimination  
Reduced autonomy and self-worth

Enables self-determination and autonomy

Stability, reduced stigma, discrimination, and fear, new or improved relationships with family, friends, and community, less trauma



It is critical to recognize that not all people who consume unregulated drugs also engage in criminal activities other than possession offences—it is likely most do not. However, acquisitive crimes (e.g. break and enter, petty theft, etc.) are often committed to manage withdrawal symptoms when no other options exist. The Un(Safe) research demonstrates that people relying on the unregulated market do not wish to engage in criminalized activities, or be subjected to victimization.

© Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council. (Un)Safe. 2021.

\*Average cost of diacetylmorphine per day in Ontario. Low-dose hydromorphone tablets are less expensive and less ideal. Other drug costs vary in prices and benefits coverage.



For more information please contact 519.575.4400  
[www.overdoseprevention.ca](http://www.overdoseprevention.ca)