



News Release

For Immediate Release

Government of Canada announces new comprehensive drug strategy supported by proposed legislative changes

Evidence-based approach restores a health focus while strengthening law enforcement.

December 12, 2016

Ottawa, ON

Government of Canada

A record number of Canadians have died from drug overdoses this year, including those involving fentanyl. Building on actions taken earlier this year, the Government of Canada is updating its drug strategy to provide for a comprehensive approach that will reduce the harms currently being experienced by individuals and communities.

The Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Health, announced today the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy. The new Strategy will replace the existing National Anti-Drug Strategy with a more balanced approach. It restores harm reduction as a core pillar of Canada's drug policy, alongside prevention, treatment and enforcement and supports all pillars with a strong evidence base.

Minister Philpott also joined the Honourable Ralph Goodale, Minister of Public Safety, to announce the introduction of Bill C-XX in the House of Commons, which supports the new strategy. The proposed legislation, which would amend the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA)*, the *Customs Act*, and the *Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act*, and make other related amendments, is designed to better equip both health and law enforcement officials to reduce the harms associated with drug and substance use in Canada.

The Bill would repeal the previous, burdensome legislative regime for establishing supervised consumption sites by streamlining the application process to align with the five factors set out by the Supreme Court of Canada. This improved approach maintains requirements for community engagement and reflects the evidence that, when properly established and maintained, supervised consumption sites save lives. To help keep deadly drugs like illicit fentanyl out of Canadian communities, the legislation also proposes to prohibit the unregistered import of pill presses, and remove the exception currently placed on border officers to only inspect mail weighing more than 30 grams, so that officers could open international mail of any weight, should they have reasonable grounds to suspect the item may contain prohibited, controlled or regulated goods. Other proposed amendments would make it a crime to possess or transport anything intended to be used to produce controlled substances, allow for temporary scheduling of new psychoactive substances, and support faster and safer disposal of seized chemicals and other dangerous substances.

Over the past year, the Government of Canada has been building a new approach to drug policy by working collaboratively with communities, provinces, territories and key stakeholders, including addictions experts, the medical community, first responders, Indigenous groups, government and non-governmental organizations, as well as Canadians with lived experience.

Quotes

"The opioid crisis has taken a toll on many communities across Canada. Our renewed, evidence-based approach to Canada's drug strategy will allow the Government to better protect Canadians, save lives and address the root causes of this crisis."





*The Honourable Jane Philpott
Minister of Health*

“The proposed changes to the *Customs Act* will help save lives and enable our officers at the border to provide greater protection than we can today. These new measures will strengthen their ability to be an important line of defence in keeping our communities safe.”

*Ralph Goodale
Minister of Public Safety*

“Evidence shows that overdoses and deaths due to opioid use are increasing in Canada. It also shows that policies and interventions that focus on harm reduction work. Canada’s new drug strategy will take a public health focussed, evidence-based approach to save lives and improve the health of Canadians.”

*Dr. Gregory Taylor
Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer*

Quick Facts

- The Government of Canada has committed to taking a compassionate, collaborative, comprehensive, and evidence-based approach to drug policy.
- Bill C-XX proposes to amend the CDSA to reduce the burden on communities who wish to apply for an exemption to operate a supervised consumption site. The proposed amendments would streamline and simplify the application criteria, while ensuring that community consultation continues to be an integral part of the process.
- Bill C-XX proposes to prohibit unregistered importation of designated devices such as pill presses and encapsulators that have been used in the illicit manufacture of narcotics.
- The bill also proposes to amend the *Customs Act* to remove the exception currently placed on border officers to only inspect mail weighing more than 30 grams, so that officers could open international mail of any weight, should they have reasonable grounds to suspect the item may contain prohibited, controlled or regulated goods.
- The Government is also proposing a number of other amendments to the CDSA that would modernize the legislative framework for controlled substances to provide inspectors with new monitoring and enforcement tools.
- These proposed amendments support Health Canada’s [Opioid Action Plan](#), which was announced by the Minister of Health in June 2016 and updated in the [Joint Statement of Action to Address the Opioid Crisis](#) signed at the Opioid Summit in Ottawa on November 19, 2016.

Associated Links

[Backgrounder - Streamlining Applications for Supervised Consumption Sites](#)
[Backgrounder - Action to Reduce the Supply of Illicit Opioids and Other Drugs](#)
[Backgrounder - Modernizing Legislation to Reduce the Risk of Diversion of Controlled Substances](#)
[Backgrounder - The New Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy](#)
[Opioid Action Plan](#)
[Joint Statement of Action to Address the Opioid Crisis](#)





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