



December 17, 2018

Dear Community Partner:

The Simcoe Muskoka Opioid Strategy (SMOS) is a multi-sector collaborative aimed at reducing opioid harms in Simcoe and Muskoka. In 2017-2018, SMOS developed and began implementing a comprehensive [Action Plan](#), organized by pillars focused on Prevention, Treatment/Clinical Practice, Harm Reduction, Enforcement, and Emergency Management.

One of the priority activities under the Harm Reduction pillar is to explore an application for supervised consumption services in Barrie. Agencies leading this work on behalf of SMOS include the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU), Canadian Mental Health Association Simcoe County (CMHA) and the Gilbert Centre. A key component of the application process is community stakeholder consultations. Our organizations will begin these consultations in early 2019 and will provide people with lived experience of opioid use, health and social service providers, outreach service providers, police, fire, paramedics, City of Barrie Council and municipal staff, businesses and the general public in Barrie with an opportunity to share thoughts and perspectives on supervised consumption services (SCS) in Barrie.

We encourage you, as a community stakeholder, to participate in the consultation process. Your feedback is important as it will help to shape a proposed model for SCS in Barrie. Results from the consultations will guide the applications to the federal and provincial governments for SCS in Barrie. You will be contacted in the first few months in 2019 to request an in-person consultation. Barrie is the focus of this consultation, as a result of the following data demonstrating high need:

- Rates of emergency department (ED) visits in 2017 for opioid overdoses were significantly higher in Barrie compared to rates in Ontario and the region of Simcoe Muskoka, and in fact ranked third in the province among municipalities larger than 100,000 people.
- In 2017 there were 81 opioid related deaths in Simcoe Muskoka, with 36 of those deaths in Barrie.
- The central north area of Barrie (which includes downtown) had ten-times the rate of Opioid Overdose ED visits in 2017 compared with the provincial average, and four-times the overall Barrie average. This includes 34 visits among those identifying homelessness (see attachment: Opioid Overdose Emergency Department Visits Map)
- Further local statistics can be found via SMDHU's [website](#)

We encourage you to review the attached infographic, which provides a brief summary of research on the impacts of supervised consumption services.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to engaging with you in the New Year. If you have questions in the interim, please contact Janice Greco, Program Manager, at (705) 721-7520 ext. 7288.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL Signed By:**

Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health

Gerry Croteau  
Executive Director, Gilbert Centre

Nancy Roxborough  
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Att (2):

- [CAMH SCS Infographic](#)
- [Opioid Overdose Emergency Department Visits Overdose ED Visit Rate](#)

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION SITES

Supervised consumption sites (SCSs) provide safe space and sterile equipment for individuals to use pre-obtained drugs under the supervision of health care staff. Consumption refers to taking opioids or other drugs by injecting, smoking, snorting or taking them orally. SCSs provide fundamental services for people who use drugs. SCSs are health care facilities that are part of a full array of harm reduction services.

## SCSs outcomes:



### Reduce individual harms

- Decrease deaths and hospital visits due to overdose or injection related emergencies
- Lower injection rates
- Reduce unsafe injection practices that are associated with HIV and Hepatitis C transmission

SCSs **do not** promote riskier substance use practices and **do not** increase substance use rates.



### Increase access to health care

- Increase access to:
  - addiction treatment & counselling
  - basic health care services, such as wound care and immunisations
  - needle exchange services
  - naloxone distribution programs
  - Hep C, STI and HIV testing

SCSs **do not** discourage people who use drugs from seeking addiction treatment.



### Decrease community harms and costs

- Lower overall health care spending
- Decrease public injection
- Reduce publicly-discarded syringes

SCSs **do not** lead to an increase in thefts, drug dealing, drug-related crimes, or drug use initiation.

## What people are saying:

*“Reduced morbidity, mortality, reduction of high-risk drug use, increased uptake of health and social care, including drug treatment, decreases risk of individuals losing their housing. Those are all benefits. Safe and non-judgmental environment in which they can go and seek further assistance.”*

(Toronto healthcare provider, TOSCA Report)

*“I’d feel a lot better about doing it in a safe injection site than at home, because, you know, you could wind up dead at home.”*

(Toronto person who uses drugs, TOSCA Report)



**Public acceptance of SCSs increases over time.**

## To apply for an SCS, or to access one in your community

Visit:

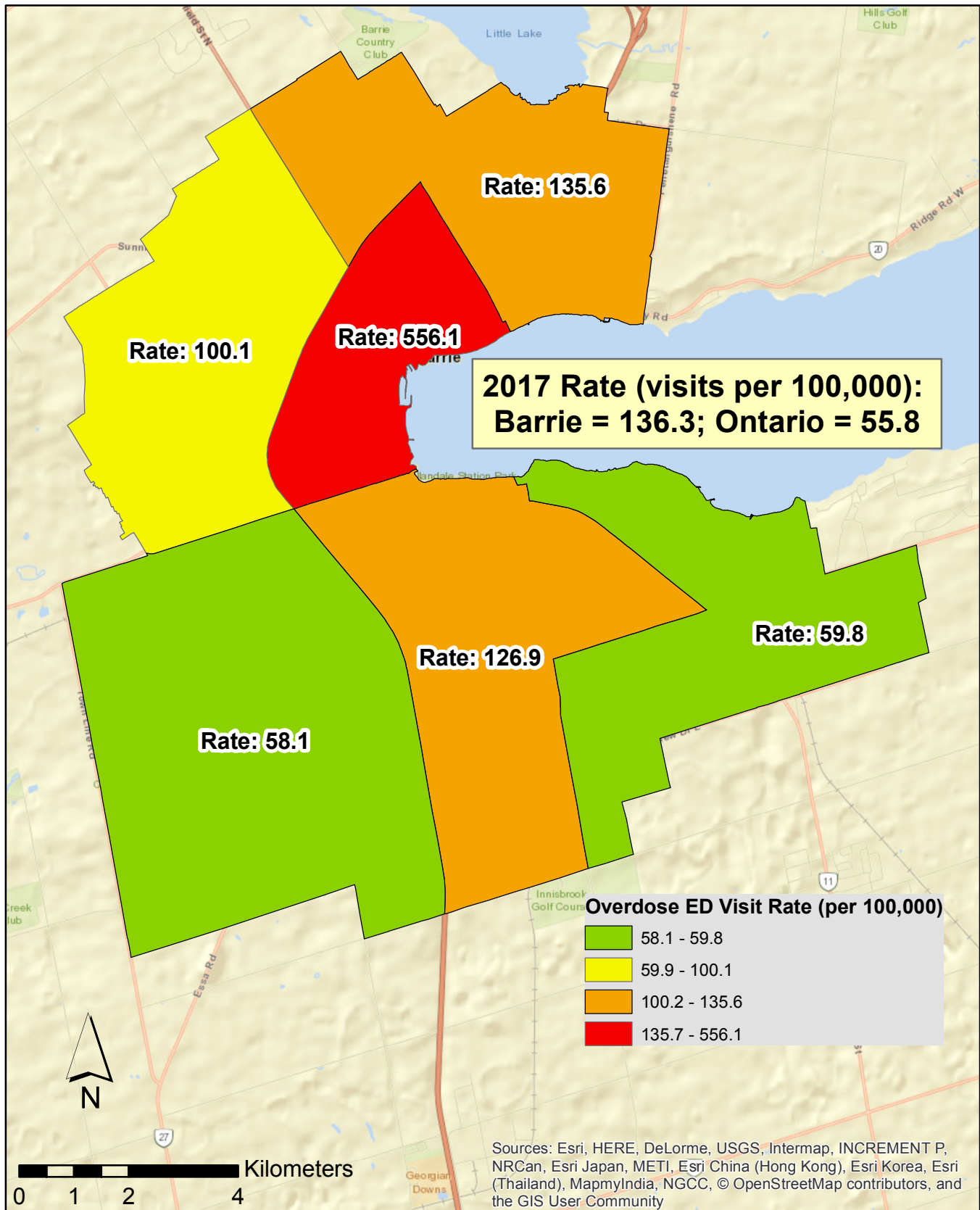
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/supervised-consumption-sites/status-application.html>

**Overdose Prevention Sites (OPS)** are a type of SCSs that are time-limited, low-barrier and faster to open. They offer more limited services.

To open an OPS in your community visit:  
[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/news/bulletin/2018/hb\\_20180111.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/news/bulletin/2018/hb_20180111.aspx)

# Opioid Overdose Emergency Department Visits

## Barrie Aggregated Census Tracts, 2017



Data source: Ambulatory Visits [2017], IntelliHealth ONTARIO, MOHLTC;  
Canadian Census 2016, Statistics Canada.

NB: Emergency visits by those identified as homeless in Barrie were assigned to the downtown zone.  
There were 34 such visits included in this map.

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