

## **HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health Position Statement**

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### **HIV/AIDS RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY HEALTH RESIDENTIAL WITHDRAWAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES POSITION STATEMENT**

Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (2014) define Residential Withdrawal Management Services (RWMS) as: assistance with voluntary withdrawal from alcohol and/or other drugs to clients who are under the influence of these substances and/or in withdrawal or otherwise in crisis directly related to these substances. 40% of clients seeking addiction services require RWMS (McGuire, MacCoy, Scott, McGuire & Prasad, 2005). Fifteen years ago, the Ontario Substance Abuse Bureau (1999) envisioned for the addiction system: that all people in Ontario with an addiction problem will have access to an integrated, client-focused system of evidence-based, cost-effective services designed to meet their diverse needs as well as the needs of family members and others affected by someone's addiction. This vision has not been realized in Guelph because Guelph does not have RWMS. Individuals requiring RWMS have to travel to either Kitchener or Hamilton.

The Research Shop is a University of Guelph initiative that meets the research needs for organizations in Guelph and the Wellington County. Through two studies, they identify the severity of the problem created by the lack of RWMS in Guelph. Pindare and Bergen (2012) interviewed service providers who reported that distance and transportation to RWMS along with miscommunication between service providers limits access to RWMS. Altass, Salguero, Wilson and Bergen (2013) interviewed people with lived experience and found the lack of RWMS is a barrier to the treatment for their addiction.

Chalmers, Cayen, Bradbury and Snowshoe (2005) explain the need for an accessible RWMS:

- RWMS is often the first step by substance users to address their addiction, and therefore is an important step in supporting this population;
- When RWMS addresses the symptoms of substance users then it reduces the harm to communities such as criminal drug seeking behaviour and violent crime;
- Immediate response by RWMS is critical to prevent damage to unborn children like Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, learning/developmental problems and further drug dependence;
- RWMS is a medical issue and access to healthcare is a Canadian right.

HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health (ARCH) recommends that an RWMS be established in Guelph. Without an RWMS the challenges are:

- Substance users cannot begin their road to recovery;
- Substance users are experiencing health inequity;
- Guelph will continue to endure harmful criminal drug seeking behaviour and violent crime;
- Guelph will lack the resources to prevent substance related damage to unborn children;
- Children are apprehended from families who are substance users, families are fractured;
- New and preventable STBBI infections will continue to be detected in this population.

ARCH encourages any initiative that brings RWMS to Guelph.

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(See next page for References)

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## References

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## HIV/AIDS AND RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY HEALTH MISSION, VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Mission

We provide anti-oppressive, sex-positive, inclusive care, treatment and prevention services in the area of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted blood-borne infections through innovative health promotion strategies and community engagement.

### Vision Statement

We dream of a time and place where everyone is free to live healthy, stigma-free, vital lives.

### Guiding Principles: What We Value and How We Work

Greater and more Meaningful Engagement of People who live with HIV/AIDS • Harm Reduction-Based • Anti-Oppressive • Inclusive • Respectful • Caring • Accepting • Passionate and Committed • Accountable • Accessible • Sex-Positive • Client-Centered • Evidence-Based • Strength-Based • Self-Determination • Flexible