

Community Harm Reduction Steering Committee

In March 2011, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit invited community organizations from the counties of Lanark and Leeds and Grenville to discuss how to reduce harm associated with intravenous drug use. A Steering Committee was formed from this group to move harm reduction strategies forward in the Tri-County area.

The purpose of this Community Harm Reduction Steering Committee is to reduce all forms of harm related to drug use in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark, including the transmission of disease and burden of illness to clients, their families and the community at large.

The committee will work to;

- Educate the public about the benefits of harm reduction strategies related to drug use and to increase community support for these strategies.
- Educate community partners and front line workers about harm reduction strategies related to drug use and to reduce the stigma surrounding drug use.
- Improve the health and safety of people using drugs, their families and the community through a variety of harm reduction strategies.
- Encourage clients to be involved with the committee and to share their knowledge related to drug use and their lived experiences.
- Ensure the progression of harm reduction strategies based on local surveillance, including the needle exchange program.

The Steering Committee now includes a variety of community agencies, law enforcement, Health Unit staff and members of the drug using community. This committee will be working closely with the Municipal Drug Strategy in Lanark, which has a Four Pillar Approach to drug use, including harm reduction.

The committee has chosen the education of professionals and public as a priority for this year. The Steering Committee will be hosting a Harm Reduction Education Forum for Health Care Providers and Front Line Service Workers on November 17, 2011 at 1:30 pm in Smiths Falls and November 24, 2011 at 1:30 pm in Brockville. A Harm Reduction Education Evening for all members of the public will be held in Brockville on November 29, 2011 at 6:30 pm and on December 6, 2011 at 6:30 pm in Smiths Falls. To find out more about the Harm Reduction Education Forum or if you are interested in joining the Harm Reduction Steering Committee, please contact Jennifer Adams, Public Health Nurse with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit at (613) 345 – 5685.