

# UNDERSTANDING Harm Reduction IN ONTARIO

## MYTH vs FACT

**Harm reduction** is a public health approach to substance use. The primary goal of harm reduction programs is to support the safer use of substances, and promote the health and well-being of individuals who use substances.

### MYTH:

Harm reduction programs are contributing to the growing number of opioid-related deaths.

### FACT:

Harm reduction programs save lives, and reduce emergency services utilization and hospitalization.

Ontario supervised consumption sites reversed **20,739 overdoses** between Mar 2020 - Jan 2024.

20,739

There have been **0 overdose fatalities** at supervised consumption sites across Canada.

0

### MYTH:

Harm reduction programs encourage people to use drugs.

### FACT:

Harm reduction programs reduce the negative consequences of drug use, and does not endorse or encourage the use of drugs.

Overdose mortality rates before and after the introduction of supervised consumption sites (SCS) in Toronto.



**MYTH:** Harm reduction programs are a waste of taxpayer dollars.

**FACT:** Harm reduction programs save Ontario's health care system millions of dollars.

Emergency department visits in London, Ontario were reduced by

**32%**

among clients who accessed safer supply programs.



**Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO) represents over 150 organizations that provide front line substance use, addiction, and mental health support and services.**

AMHO members support Ontarians through their mental health and substance use health challenges by providing community-based treatment, including counselling, structured psychotherapy, case management, withdrawal management, live-in addictions treatment, peer support, harm reduction supports, and supportive housing.