



CANADIAN CENTRE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Drug Strategy Review Report

Common Trends in Provincial / Territorial and Regional Drug Strategies

Laura Dunbar
Research Assistant
Research and Policy Division

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This document has been compiled with information from several provincial, territorial and regional drug strategy frameworks and reports. It articulates and summarizes trends, defined as common elements, found in the current actions and future recommendations of the reviewed strategies. The current actions and future recommendations listed in this document reflect those articulated by the various provincial, territorial and regional strategies. This document does not report on the current status of the recommendations made.

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INTRODUCTION

The use and abuse of substances is a problem with serious health, social and economic consequences. Considerable attention and public concern has been focused on this issue and the negative effects of substance abuse on individuals, families and communities. Government ministries and departments, law enforcement agencies, municipalities, professional organizations and community groups have acted to address the use and abuse of various substances which has resulted in the development of actions and planned actions incorporated into strategies.

The objective of this report is to develop an inventory of common trends from provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies with respect to initiatives in prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction. Any other common trends and trends with respect to special populations will also be addressed. For the purposes of this report, the drug strategies are grouped into general drug strategies, strategies particularly addressing methamphetamine and strategies addressing prescription and other narcotic drug use and abuse.¹

In addition, a summary will be provided that reviews all of the drug strategies with respect to their current practices and future recommendations for action that support activities and measures aimed at developing and sustaining the addictions workforce.

Finally, common trends among the drug strategies with respect to the priorities set out in the *National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances in Canada* will be addressed. The various strategies have put forward several recommendations that are in line with the priorities outlined in the Framework.

A general goal of this report is to provide information which may stimulate discussion and enhance other research promoting and supporting the development of collaborative and comprehensive drug strategies in all the provinces, territories and regions.

¹ The individual strategies that are contained in each grouping can be found in the Appendix – List of Drug Strategies

TRENDS IN PREVENTION

Prevention is broadly understood to mean actions that prevent or delay the onset of alcohol and other drug use, and promote health. Prevention efforts may be directed to the population as a whole, or targeted to those people who are at an increased risk of developing alcohol or other drug problems. The intent of prevention is to enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors for substance abuse. Healthy development ultimately depends on the success of prevention efforts that provide children and adolescents with meaningful opportunities to develop competence and resilience.

Prevention efforts are generally under-resourced. Comprehensive and integrated approaches to the prevention of substance misuse need to be developed as part of the strategies to reduce the numbers of individuals who develop problematic relationships with drugs. Significant effort must be made to engage communities in discussions on substance misuse prevention.

Provincial / Territorial and Regional Drug Strategies

Health Promotion

The role of the health system is to advocate for the development of healthy public policies and supportive physical and social environments that will enable people to make healthier choices, thereby preventing or reducing problematic substance use. Several drug strategies including *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction*, the Northwest Territories' *Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services* and the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* emphasize the importance of building healthy children and healthy families as a means of preventing or delaying the onset of substance abuse.

These strategies have suggested that health promotion should provide individuals, families and communities with the skills and resources necessary to actively achieve and maintain healthy lifestyles. Health promotion activities include public education campaigns on healthy lifestyle choices using a popular education model and the implementation of the Healthy Lifestyles and Work Experience Program.

Primary Prevention

A first step in prevention is to address substance use and abuse. This can be accomplished through the development of a public awareness campaign about the harms associated with substance abuse. Most provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies stipulate the importance of promoting awareness and education as fundamental components in prevention initiatives.

Several strategies have suggested that a public action campaign should be delivered by community centres, neighbourhood houses, public institutions, business organizations and through the mass media that targets the general population as well as specific populations. It would empower communities to address substance abuse issues on the streets and in their homes, by

providing community tool kits, a web-based inventory of speakers and experts on substance abuse and centralized prevention and education resources.

Another common recommendation shared by several strategies is the development of a comprehensive community awareness and education strategy which would:

- Raise community awareness of drug issues, causes and impacts
- Coordinate action on drug issues at local, regional and provincial levels
- Expand and promote closer working relationships between community and government by integrating resources in prevention-based responses
- Increase attention on education and prevention in places such as schools, the workplace and community drug education programs
- Create better links between funding programs and initiatives
- Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of resources

The *Toronto Drug Strategy* and the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* promote the targeting of licensed establishments in their prevention efforts. In Toronto, the Safer Bars Program which seeks to prevent alcohol related violence in licensed and other establishments is promoted and in addition, a review of the potential to include this training as a mandatory element of the municipal licensing requirements is also recommended. In the Yukon strategy, there is an emphasis placed on the promotion of Responsible Server Training in bars.

Secondary Prevention

The Québec strategy *"Unis dans l'action" Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie* and *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction* both address the need for prevention programs to target particular at-risk populations. These strategies suggest the importance of reinforcing prevention directly with those persons with particular needs and that prevention programs should be targeted to specific substance abuse.

At-risk groups identified by the various strategies to be targeted for prevention initiatives include:

1. Targeting Youth

In addition to providing education to the public as a whole on the consequences of substance use and abuse, the majority of the drug strategies have recognized the importance in targeting "youth" as a group in need of additional prevention strategies. The goal is the development and implementation of early evidence-based targeted prevention strategies that will help delay the age at which youth begin to start using alcohol and other drugs.

Most of the strategies advocate the use of school based prevention strategies. This includes the development of particular school curriculum on health and career education for students from elementary school to high school.

Particular to the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse* and the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* is the initiative to increase the availability of counselors and

provide schools with resource officers who can directly help young people who have substance abuse problems and those that are at risk of involvement with substance abuse.

2. Targeting the Family

Certain strategies support the development of prevention efforts targeted at the family. *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*, the *Toronto Drug Strategy* and the *Ottawa Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy Initiative* promote a prevention program targeting parents. This program would increase support and awareness education for parents and families affected by addictions. In addition, it would be important to work with community based agencies to expand comprehensive prevention programming for families.

3. Targeting Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Certain Strategies, particularly *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction* and the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* have noted the importance of addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in relation to prevention strategies.

Prevention strategies targeting FASD should include:

- Culturally responsive community based approaches to increase awareness and prevention of FASD and support early childhood development and families such as the *Aboriginal Early Childhood Initiative* in British Columbia
- Learning how to help children with FASD in schools by having the Department of Education in British Columbia enhance its existing FASD Project that offers training and support for educators
- Developing culturally relevant grade 1-12 curriculum on FASD for Yukon students

Provincial Methamphetamine Strategies

To date, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Alberta and Québec have developed strategies that specifically address the methamphetamine problem within and across their borders. All of these strategies address the need to inform the public and provide education on the harms associated with methamphetamine use and abuse.

Informing the Public

Several recommendations were made to increase public awareness of the risks of methamphetamine use and addiction and include:

- There should be a focused public information campaign to increase awareness among the public and high risk populations about methamphetamine use, its harmful impacts, prevention, early intervention and treatment and the messaging should be accurate, factual and consistent
- Advocate for the development of a National Awareness Campaign

- Information should be made available at correctional centres, youth custody centres, community policing centres and community organizations
- Information should be made available at organizations serving at-risk and high risk youth such as the Ministry of Youth Services offices and agencies, youth custody and youth forensic psychiatric centres, and child and youth mental health services
- Web-based video and print materials should be made available at needle exchanges, pharmacies, methadone clinics, physician offices, community health centres, emergency rooms, drop-in centres and through community outreach workers
- All partners should work with the news media to increase public awareness of methamphetamine, its use and where to seek help

The *Manitoba Meth Strategy* further emphasizes the importance of providing information to the public on drug labs. Current actions to increase public awareness on this issue include the RCMP's development of information to help Manitobans identify meth labs and suspicious activities which is available on their website, and the Winnipeg Police Service is providing information on their website about clandestine drug labs including the dangers associated with them, environmental hazards, child endangerment issues and how to recognize an illegal drug lab.

Education

Several methamphetamine strategies have recognized the importance of developing and enhancing school curriculum that addresses the harms of methamphetamine.

Recommendations include:

- Including learning outcomes and achievement indicators for substance misuse prevention in prescribed provincial K-12 curriculum and providing assessments of health enhancing decisions
- Promoting the use of evidence based prevention programs and supports for children and youth in K-12 schools
- Promoting the fostering of peer education and peer support initiatives for children and youth in K-12 schools
- Producing extensive educational materials specific to methamphetamine, including print and web-based resources, suited to the needs of parents, teachers, clinicians and the general public

Agricultural Initiatives and Education

The *Manitoba Meth Strategy* has taken several steps towards enhancing the knowledge of the agricultural industry about the precursors for methamphetamine.

- The *Prescribed Spraying Equipment and Controlled Products Regulation* has been amended to require those who legally have anhydrous ammonia (precursor) stored on their property to immediately report any missing inventory
- An education campaign for fertilizer distributors about the illegal use of anhydrous ammonia in meth production has been developed

- An education campaign to educate farmers and other rural residents about safeguarding tanks of anhydrous ammonia has also been developed

Prescription and Other Narcotic Drug Strategies

Prevention and Education

Newfoundland and Labrador's *OxyContin Task Force Final Report* emphasizes the importance of the public having accurate information on prescription drug use, and its misuse and abuse.

Current actions and recommendations include:

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive education program for physicians and pharmacists
- Enhancing pain management curriculum in the undergraduate and post graduate program for all physicians and interdisciplinary assessment and non-pharmacological interventions should be receiving the same attention as pharmacological interventions
- The provincial government has embarked on an intensive public awareness campaign in senior and junior schools in the province
 - Many of the regions incorporated information about OxyContin in a general presentation on prescription and other drug abuse
 - There are several elements that are essential for a comprehensive drug abuse prevention and education program:
 1. Regular and consistent education for all students from grades K-12
 2. Honest and factual information that presents the dangers and benefits of using drugs as well as the short term and long term effects
 3. Specific skill development in areas like communication, decision making and conflict resolution

The Report further emphasizes that drug abuse prevention and education should include components that span beyond the school curriculum to include media campaigns, family and parent education and special programs for high risk youth.

TRENDS IN TREATMENT

While preventing alcohol and other drug use is important, it is equally important to provide treatment for people who are currently experiencing problems with substances. Treatment refers to a range of interventions that assist individuals in dealing with their problems, restoring their health and preventing the reoccurrence of problems. Research shows that treatment should be individualized to meet client needs and that access to a continuum of treatment services is required to effectively meet these needs.

Provincial / Territorial and Regional Drug Strategies

Common Trends in the Continuum of Treatment Services

Early Identification and Treatment

The focus on early identification and treatment is most apparent in *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction* and Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie*.

Some of the recommendations of these strategies include:

- Identification and referral at the onset of problematic substance use
 - This would include instituting regional services to provide rapid evaluation of clients to orient them towards particular treatment services
- An intensification of detection and orientation towards proper resources for treatment for particular populations including children of alcoholics or drug addicts, adolescents, the elderly and persons in poverty
- Developing school based early identification and intervention programs
- Developing and providing a tool kit for early detection and intervention
- Providing an intervention to at-risk drinkers such as a program of controlled consumption

Treatment and Self-Management with Selected Supports

These types of treatment services are supported by a limited number of the drug strategies. Particularly included are the strategies from British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Ontario and Québec.

Services provided under this heading include:

- Detox/withdrawal management services
- Opioid replacement therapy
- Methadone maintenance programs (particularly in Vancouver)
- Self-management information about mental disorders and addictions
- Concurrent disorder programs
- Case management as part of an integrated treatment plan

Intensive Treatment

The recommendations surrounding these types of treatment services are also restricted to a few drug strategies including those from British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

Services provided under this heading include:

- Specialized residential treatment and rehabilitation
- Residential, intensive day treatment and specialized aftercare programs
- Specialized concurrent disorder programs
- Specialized programs for high-needs subpopulations

Long-term Rehabilitation and Supports

The recommendations surrounding these types of treatment services are again only reflected in a few drug strategies including those from British Columbia, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.

Services provided under this heading include:

- Ongoing treatment and recovery supports
- Supportive competitive employment programs
- Retraining programs
- Case management services integrated with treatment and on-going follow up
- Community based counseling services
- Facility based healing programs

Treatment for Special Populations

Treatment for Diverse Groups

In the *Ottawa Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy Initiative*, the *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report* and Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie* strong advocacy exists in the continuum of treatment for specialized services for different population groups. Specialized services may be provided in population-specific settings, such as women only services or youth only services, or as population-appropriate responses within a more generalized treatment environment.

Recommendations include:

- Reviewing existing treatment services and treatment pathways and recommending modifications to existing services and/or the development of new treatment modalities for different groups like youth, adults with chronic addictions, families, dual diagnosis, homeless, women, solvent abusers and any other target populations that are at risk
- Providing collaborative programs for treatment to deal with concurrent disorders and the particular needs of particular persons

Treatment Programming for Youth

The large majority of the provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies advocate the need to expand youth treatment. Adolescence is a primary period of initiation of substance use and it is also a time when young people increase their consumption of alcohol and other drugs. Because of this understanding of the importance of the period of adolescence, many of the strategies advocate the need to expand youth treatment. A number of risk factors have been identified which can predispose young people to use substances heavily and develop health and social problems as a result. These adolescents require access to a treatment continuum that includes detoxification, outreach and crisis services, out-patient counseling, intensive day programs, residential treatment and aftercare support.

Recommendations include:

- Increasing Detox services for youth
- Establishing more treatment beds
- Establishing long term treatment centres for youth
- Establishing treatment for youth under 16
- Urging the provincial governments to allocate increased funding for residential treatment services for youth

Increasing youth treatment services, particularly residential treatment is an important issue as there are currently very few treatment programs with a residential component for youth. The lack of residential treatment for youth is an issue nationally and it has been particularly cited as a priority issue in Vancouver's, Toronto's and Ottawa's drug strategies.

Involvement of the Family

Several drug strategies have emphasized the importance of including the family institution in the continuum of treatment services. British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan have all advocated the importance of providing support services for families and increasing family involvement in treatment decisions.

Several key recommendations with respect to support services for families include:

- Expanding support services to families of children who are involved in substance misuse in order to breakdown stereotypes, help parents deal with feelings of guilt and anger and help them to understand addiction issues such as relapse
- Increase family programming
- Introduce more flexible and accessible treatment supports for individuals and their families by:
 - Providing respite support for families with substance abusing youth
 - Providing transition housing for youth and adults
 - Developing a family treatment centre that will offer inpatient care for people with children

Several key recommendations with respect to family involvement in treatment services include:

- Involving family/significant others in the care and treatment decisions affecting them and providing them with the opportunity to participate in system-wide planning and evaluation

- Dedication to maximizing the potential of family self-help and in facilitating the involvement of other community resources
- Including family/significant others as essential participants in the development, planning and evaluation of prevention, treatment and aftercare programming

Treatment Programming within the Criminal Justice System

There are several drug strategies which address treatment services in connection with the criminal justice system. These strategies support alcohol and other drug programming that takes into account the unique issues and circumstances that affect those in connection with the criminal justice system.

Several recommendations include:

- Making substance abuse treatment available to individuals who are in custody
- Expanding and increasing the availability of drug treatment options in prisons to include methadone maintenance therapy for any inmate with an opiate addiction
- Establishing comprehensive release and follow-up care plans before offenders are released back into the community

In addition, there are several drug strategies that emphasize the importance of developing Drug Treatment Courts as an alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders. The offenders would instead participate in a supervised specialized addiction treatment program. The strategies encouraging the development and implementation of Drug Treatment Courts are Alberta's drug strategy, *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*, *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*, the Premier's *Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse* and Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie*. The regions that currently have Drug Treatment Courts are Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg.

The *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* has recommended the development of a problem solving court. The Department of Justice will develop a specialized therapeutic court to deal with offenders with drug or alcohol addictions, symptoms of FASD and/or other mental health issues.

Treatment Programming for Aboriginals

Several provincial, territorial and regional strategies recognize the importance in increasing specialized programs for treatment that are adapted for particular aboriginal communities in collaboration with these communities.

Treatment Programming for Women

The *Manitoba Mental Health and Addictions Strategy* supports treatment programming for women transitioning out of the sex trade.

Additional Trends in Treatment Services

Access to Treatment

The *Toronto Drug Strategy*, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*, the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*, Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie* and the *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report* all advocate the importance of providing clear, accessible, multi-lingual information to all members of the community about the full range of substance use programs and services and how to easily access them.

Several recommendations with respect to accessing treatment services include:

- Developing a Resource Directory for treatment
- Creating a Treatment Database that will provide substance abuse programs and services with up to date centralized information
- Designing user friendly information access sources for clients and service providers to enhance awareness of addiction and human services resources that are available for addressing addictions issues
- Providing a catalogue of public and community resources certified by the ministry to provide services (this recommendation is specific to Québec)

Continuum of Services

Creating a continuum of care requires an array of services with many points of contact and entry into treatment in order to deal with different populations and drug users. Services include out-patient counseling, crisis services, detoxification, short and long term residential programs and overnight shelter. Several drug strategies have emphasized the importance of ensuring that a continuum of services exists in their jurisdictions. These strategies include Alberta's strategy, *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*, *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*, the Northwest Territories *Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services*, the *Ottawa Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy Initiative* and the *Toronto Drug Strategy*.

Recommendations made by the strategies based on the implementation of a continuum of services include:

- Ensuring that individuals and families are able to gain access to a continuum of community-based, core wellness services
- Ensuring individuals, families and communities have access to a range of facility based services
- Particularly in Ottawa, increasing the capacity of treatment along a continuum of service that addresses identified gaps including out-patient and residential treatment for youth, increased services for diverse groups including withdrawal management of concurrent disorders and transitional housing
- Expanding the capacity and range of treatment services that reflects the broad diversity of need

Quality Treatment Services

Several drug strategies emphasize the importance of the delivery of quality treatment services to consumers. All addiction treatment services as well as all concurrent disorder services (mental health and addictions) should be based on current evidence and reflect best practices in the field.

The main recommendation supported by these strategies is the need to establish a range of community-based, best practice specialized addiction and mental health/addiction services in each region/province that best meet the needs of the population.

Supportive Housing

Four drug strategies in particular, *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Abuse and Addiction*, *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*, the *Ottawa Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy Initiative* and the *Toronto Drug Strategy* address the need for supportive housing. Their recommendations involve ensuring that a continuum of supportive housing is developed including housing and/or shelter to stabilize those who misuse drugs and alcohol, and drug-and-alcohol-housing for individuals in recovery. It is also important to note that with respect to post treatment/continuing care the lack of transitional housing is not unique to one region or province; the above mentioned strategies all give attention to the need for appropriate housing.

Mobile Treatment

The implementation of mobile treatment is emphasized by the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Saskatchewan drug strategies.

The recommendations for a mobile treatment program include:

- Developing a mobile treatment program for family and youth
- Developing a mobile treatment program for youth in Northern Communities
- Implementing the "No Fixed Address Outreach Van" in the Yukon
 - Support would be provided by the Department of Health and Social Services
 - The "Van" would bring a variety of services including safety and support services, counselling, education, referral services and health services to individuals on the streets

Provincial Methamphetamine Strategies

The methamphetamine strategies all emphasize the importance of providing access to a continuum of treatment services; however the focus on particular treatment services varies by individual strategy.

Early Intervention

The focus on early intervention is most apparent in Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'intervention sur la méthamphetamine et les autres drogues de synthèse*.

Recommendations include:

- Systematic detection of drug addiction for at-risk youth, pregnant women and young mothers who use social services
- Intensification of knowledge diffusion to at-risk populations on crystal meth and other synthetic drugs
- In collaboration with the community, develop experimental projects to prevent and reduce consumption of crystal meth and other synthetic drugs

Treatment

Most of the methamphetamine strategies make recommendations in the area of treatment services that are provided to clients.

Recommendations include:

- Increase the capacities for addiction agencies
 - Clients who need help with crystal meth addictions often present with mental health issues and as a result, services need to be able to respond to such demands
- Consolidation of “proximic” services for at-risk drug users including street youth and injection drug users
- Increase/ameliorate the accessibility to treatment services for troubled youth and adolescents
- Opening new youth detoxification and residential treatment beds through a program that incorporates specific protocols for methamphetamine
- Collaboration for a cross Canada conference on the best approaches and practices with respect to treatment services for methamphetamine addictions
- Put together hospital interventions/treatment for methamphetamine use and abuse

Crisis Support Services for Parents and Family Members

This trend in providing crisis support services for parents and family members is particularly evident in the *Manitoba Meth Strategy*. The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba provides a family program to support family members as they deal with the crisis of crystal meth use by a family member.

There are also additional crisis supports available including:

- Mobile crisis units that provide intervention services within an individual’s community
- Short term community based crisis stabilization units that provide mental health intervention for those requiring support but not hospitalization
- Crisis lines provide telephone intervention and suicide prevention services that give immediate short term intervention and serve as referral links to other services

Prescription and Other Narcotic Drug Strategies

There are several recommendations made by the Newfoundland and Labrador *OxyContin Task Force Final Report* that fall along the treatment continuum and that are made for various target populations.

Detoxification

- Develop a provincially accepted protocol for Opioid Withdrawal Management
- Develop detoxification services for youth

Adult Treatment

- Increasing the number of addiction counselors in the province where the expansion should be based on regional needs
- Out-of-province addictions treatment programs should continue to be used for individuals requiring specialized services as assessed by an addictions professional

Youth Treatment

- In respect to outpatient services; one youth counselor should be hired for addiction services in every region of the province (total 6)
- An adolescent day treatment program should be developed
- Youth requiring intensive addictions residential treatment should continue to be referred to programs outside the province
- Increase family involvement in the treatment process through education and counseling

Adult Offender Treatment

- With respect to Her Majesty's Penitentiary, programming should be offered to include two provincial programs and one core federal program
- Community based treatment should be made available (Howard House – 7 week program)
- The provincial Department of Justice should consider developing and implementing a methadone maintenance program for provincial correctional facilities

TRENDS IN ENFORCEMENT

Policing and enforcement covers a broad range of activities that are essential to reduce the production and trafficking of illegal drugs, control and regulate legal drugs, prevent crimes associated with alcohol or other drugs and increase community health and safety. Municipal, provincial and national enforcement agencies are increasingly involved in collaborating with licensing authorities, the hospitality industry, health and social services and schools to develop initiatives that reduce alcohol and other drug problems. Policing and enforcement have an impact on the success of prevention and harm reduction initiatives, just as these efforts have an impact on criminal and regulatory activity.

Provincial / Territorial and Regional Drug Strategies

Getting Tough on Drug Dealers and Organized Crime

Several drug strategies, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan, A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*, Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie* and *Manitoba's Framework for Addressing the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs*, focus on targeting drug dealers and organized crime in order to reduce the supply and demand for illegal drugs. Enforcement is relative to the possession, production and trafficking of illegal drugs.

Several recommendations include:

- The provinces and territories should work together to urge the federal government to reduce the availability of illegal drugs by increasing the penalties for their manufacturing and trafficking
- Increasing organized crime units and police drug squads in order to better target organized crime, drug houses that cause neighbourhood disruption and mid and upper level drug dealers that supply street level drug dealers
- In targeting organized crime; harmonize interventions to reduce access to illegal substances

Restricting Access

The *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan, Manitoba's Framework for Addressing the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs*, the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse* and Alberta's strategy *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*, all support restricting the availability of drug precursors.

Recommendations include:

- Through the cooperation between provinces and territories; to call upon the federal government to reduce the availability of illegal drugs by strengthening the regulation of chemicals used to produce drugs such as GHB and methamphetamine

- The provinces and territories, in coordination, should reduce the availability of the precursors of methamphetamine by working to move cold medications that contain single-source pseudoephedrine behind pharmacy counters
- Build on MethWatch, a coalition of retail and wholesale businesses, to restrict the supply of ingredients used in the manufacture of crystal meth

Surveillance

The *Toronto Drug Strategy* recommends the development of a local drug use surveillance system with protocols to issue broad based alerts about potentially dangerous substances. This would be made possible through collaboration with several partners including the coroner's office, the police service, hospitals, pharmacies, researchers, community groups and people who use substances.

Supply Reduction: Going After the Source

The *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse* supports several additional enforcement strategies to reduce the supply of illegal drugs by going after the source of the problem.

Recommendations include:

- Increasing the number of officers to enforce the *Safer Neighbourhoods and Communities Act*
- Hiring more drug enforcement officers
- Making it more difficult to manufacture and distribute illicit substances by promoting the province's toll-free hotline for reporting drug houses

Legislation and Regulation

The *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report* suggests that policy should be formulated that will reduce the possibility of double doctoring, over prescribing of Ritalin, prescription drug abuse and better use of drug plan information to flag previously prescribed medication history for patients.

Several strategies have included reference to the implementation and enforcement of certain pieces of legislation in their reports.

1. *The Drug Endangered Children's Act*
 - This Act is intended to protect children from serious drug activity. It gives police the authority to charge parents who expose their children under 18 years of age to illegal drug manufacturing or drug trafficking activities.
 - This legislation is referenced by Alberta's strategy *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use* and *Manitoba's Framework for Addressing the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs*.

2. *Youth Drug Stabilization Act*
 - This Act allows a provincial court to issue an order under which a person under 18 can be taken to a designated facility for assessment by addictions specialists to determine if it is in the youth's best interest to be detained for stabilization.
 - This particular Act was implemented by Manitoba and referenced in the *Manitoba Health and Addictions Strategy*. Similar legislation has been implemented by Saskatchewan.

3. *The Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act*
 - This Act gives parents the authority to place their children under age 18 into a mandatory drug detoxification and assessment program.
 - This Act was implemented in Alberta and British Columbia and is referenced in Alberta's strategy *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use* and *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver* respectively.

4. *Safer Neighbourhoods and Communities Act*
 - This legislation was referenced by the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* and the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*.

Focus on Youth

Since youth is one of the key populations targeted by the provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies, consequently several drug strategies promote enforcement priorities that target youth. These strategies include the Alberta strategy, *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*, *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* and Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie*.

Enforcement recommendations targeting youth include:

- Intervening with drug-endangered children
 - Drug-endangered children have been described as those children "who suffer physical or psychological harm or neglect resulting from exposure to illegal drugs or persons under the influence of illegal drugs or exposure to dangerous environments where drugs are being manufactured."
- Focus on youth involved in the sex trade that would integrate enforcement efforts against customers and pimps and co-ordinate with health and social support services to direct youth treatment programs with the goal of preventing their return to the street sex trade
- Developing secure identification cards
 - This project will assist licensed premises and liquor stores to more easily identify minors and refuse service
- Targeted enforcement
 - "Inspection Blitz" will focus on checking for intoxicated persons or checking for minors in a number of licensed operations
- Reinforce the coordination and inspection of laws preventing minors from consuming alcohol

Provincial Methamphetamine Strategies

Reducing the Demand

The majority of the methamphetamine strategies focus on targeting drug dealers and organized crime in order to reduce the demand for methamphetamine.

Several recommendations include:

- Supporting the continued investigation by police of meth production and trafficking by criminals, especially those involved in organized production and trafficking operations.
- Strengthened law enforcement through additional resources, better coordination and successful efforts to encourage amendments to federal legislation to increase penalties for methamphetamine production and trafficking
- Suppression of clandestine labs by law enforcement officers

Restricting Access to Precursors

Several strategies emphasize the need to restrict access to methamphetamine precursors, particularly ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. Additionally, health representatives from the Western provinces agree that a phased-in approach to restricting access to precursors in the illicit manufacture of crystal meth is required.

Recommendations to restrict access to precursors include:

- Controlling access to ingredients readily available in retail pharmacies and other retail outlets to reduce the production and sale of methamphetamine
- Through collaboration with Health Canada, ensure that the integrity of the supply chain for ephedrine and pseudoephedrine products will be strengthened to limit illicit diversion of precursor products used in the production of crystal meth
- The Western provinces are working together in order to urge the federal government to create a new offence for possession of precursors for the purpose of meth production

Legislation and Regulation

Several strategies have included reference to implementation and enforcement of certain pieces of legislation in their reports.

1. Increased Penalties

- The federal government increased the maximum penalties for possession, trafficking, importation and production of methamphetamine to parallel other hard drugs like heroin and cocaine
- The increase is from a maximum penalty of 10 years to a maximum penalty of life imprisonment for trafficking and production of methamphetamine

2. Endangered Children Protocol
 - Child and family services in certain provinces are in the process of establishing a specific protocol to deal with children and youth who are found in meth labs or who are known to be addicted to methamphetamine

3. The *Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act*
 - This Act gives parents the authority to place their children under age 18 into a mandatory drug detoxification and assessment program

Prescription and Other Narcotic Drug Strategies

Policing and enforcement does not appear to be a main focus of the *OxyContin Task Force Final Report*. There is one recommendation made by the task force that resources should be dedicated to the training of police officers and the allocation of officers to drug prevention, drug enforcement, and investigation.

TRENDS IN HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction recognizes that it is impossible to completely eliminate substance use, and that there is a need to minimize the harms caused by alcohol and other drug use. Harm reduction aims to improve health, social and economic outcomes for society through a range of pragmatic treatment and public health approaches. Harm reduction respects personal autonomy and supports practical interventions that assist people to address their most pressing health challenges and concerns.

Provincial / Territorial and Regional Drug Strategies

Needle Exchange Programs

There are several drug strategies which advocate the use of needle exchange programs including *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver, Manitoba's Framework for Addressing the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs* and the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*.

Methadone Maintenance Programs

There are only two provincial drug strategies which firmly advocate the use of community methadone maintenance programs, *Manitoba's Framework for Addressing the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs* and the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*.

Safe Injection Rooms or Supervised Consumption Rooms

These legally sanctioned facilities could provide safe, secure environment where drug users could inject under the care of health professionals trained in safe injection techniques and overdose response. These facilities have only been promoted by *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*.

Low Threshold Support Programs or Day Centres

The term "low-threshold" refers to programs where abstinence is not a requirement for admittance. Low threshold support programs have been a key component in successful European drug strategies and are being promoted for use in Canada by *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*.

Overdose Prevention

This harm reduction program involves establishing testing procedures for street drugs and to develop a database on changes in their purity to be used by enforcement agencies, health service providers and the community in order to support the development of overdose prevention strategies. This trend has again been promoted by *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*.

Law Enforcement Component

A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver supports the belief that harm reduction must include a law enforcement strategy to move addicts off the street, out of back alleys and into health services

Expansion of Services

The *Toronto Drug Strategy* supports the expansion of innovative harm reduction outreach strategies including the provision of equipment to support safer use of substances to reach marginalized drug users.

Provincial Methamphetamine Strategies

Crystal Meth and Other Amphetamines: An Integrated BC Strategy is the only provincial methamphetamine strategy to address harm reduction as a priority action. BC's methamphetamine strategy provides practical solutions for addressing the harm associated with methamphetamine use and other illicit drug use. Harm reduction recognizes the necessity of helping people stay as safe and healthy as possible, and supporting them in informed decision making.

Recommendations to increase safety and reduce individual harm include:

- Increasing the availability of first responders, as well as access to water and fluid stations at events
- Making safe paraphernalia available, such as needle exchanges, at locations where there are methamphetamine users

Prescription and Other Narcotic Drug Strategies

Two programs are recommended under the harm reduction heading for Newfoundland and Labrador's *OxyContin Task Force Final Report*. They are methadone maintenance programs and needle exchange programs.

OTHER TRENDS

The following are additional common trends among the various drug strategies that relate to their underlying principles and priorities as well as trends relating to the actual implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategies.

Provincial / Territorial and Regional Drug Strategies

Concurrent Disorders

While several frameworks address substance use as a health issue, they also acknowledge that responding effectively to problematic substance use and associated mental health problems requires a collaborative, multi-system response. "Investments should focus on a combination of areas including prevention, intervention, outreach, and facility based care, to deal with mental health and addiction issues" (Health Minister Tim Sale – Manitoba). Several strategies including Alberta's strategy, *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*, *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction*, *Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Framework for Mental Health and Addiction Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*, the *Ottawa Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy Initiative* and Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie* emphasize that there are critical factors for success in addressing concurrent disorders including ensuring that there are defined roles and responsibilities at the individual, community, health authority and government levels.

Several recommendations for addressing concurrent disorders include:

- Guiding the introduction of co-ordinated access to treatment services and comprehensive case management for people with concurrent disorders
- Strong program connections among all components of the addictions and mental health system, the broader health system and the community should be developed and will facilitate the provision of timely and appropriate services
- A mental health and addictions collaborative program design should be developed and delivered
- Partnerships with mental health and addictions organizations should be strengthened

Increase Knowledge

The Canadian Addictions Survey has made a major contribution to providing recent data on the prevalence and problems related to alcohol and other drug use. At the same time, gaps remain and there is much work that can be done to improve research and surveillance activities. There are several strategies that emphasize the importance of increasing knowledge on substance abuse and addictions including Alberta's strategy *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*, the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*, the *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report* and Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie*.

There are several recommendations that have been made in the attempt to increase knowledge and facilitate knowledge transfer and they include:

- A research agenda must be developed and should:
 - Promote multi-disciplinary research that informs prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement initiatives
 - Include monitoring and evaluation to determine whether objectives of the strategy are being met
- Annual clinical conferences should be hosted for the education and inspiration of those working in the addictions field
- Knowledge about substance abuse should be improved by conducting provincial surveys regarding alcohol and drug abuse
- Improve knowledge by creating new research chair positions at certain post-secondary institutions
- A review of alcohol and drug services should be conducted resulting in recommended actions for change within treatment and detoxification facilities across the provinces
- Additional research should be conducted to acquire knowledge and survey matters related to addictions by:
 1. Putting in place an information system for addictions clients
 2. Developing and coordinating a research program on addictions through contributions from different partners
 3. Putting research results to use in order to ameliorate political and interdisciplinary programs and interventions

Community Involvement

The role of the community in the addictions field has been supported by several strategies including Alberta's strategy, *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*, the Northwest Territories *Interim Report on the Mental Health and Addiction Services*, the *Toronto Drug Strategy*, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*, the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse* and the *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report*. These strategies have recognized the importance of including the community in their frameworks and encourage providing more resources to support communities to develop plans to identify and combat social issues such as substance use and addiction.

Several recommendations have been made supporting the role of the community in the addictions filed:

- The police service, schools and other partners should work with neighborhood groups to support a comprehensive and inclusive approach to substance use issues to develop locally based strategies to reduce alcohol and other drug-related crime
- A community development framework should be created and implemented which will bring communities together in a cohesive and shared approach to battling substance abuse issues
- A strategy and action plan should be developed which would result in more localized programming and service delivery and options for neighborhood initiatives
- Support should be provided to community drug coalitions that are developing or planning to develop local strategies to deal with substance use

- Support for community drug coalitions should be enhanced as it provides a vital mechanism for:
 1. Creating new partnerships to address areas of mutual concern
 2. Contributing to regional, provincial and national planning efforts
 3. Exchanging information about trends and issues, available funding, existing programs and practices, emerging issues and lessons learned from other coalitions
 4. Bridging the gap between research and action by enhancing the capacity of community groups and service providers to use evidence to guide their decisions and actions
 5. Advocating for ongoing research, healthy public policy, and a sustainable continuum of services

Partnership Development / Collaboration

Partnership development and collaboration are seen as important aspects in the implementation of a strategy or framework particularly in the case of the *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report*, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* and *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*.

Several recommendations were made in this area and include:

- Establishing regular inter-agency network forums that include both Aboriginal and mainstream agencies
 - These communication forums should expand in the future to include clients and the broader community as well
- Initiating a meeting between the addiction treatment centres to discuss a number of issues such the assessment of screening practices, wait list issues, treatment approaches and length, programming for youth and families, admission criteria, client mix, restrictions on readmission policies and programming for clients with dual diagnoses
- Representatives from the enforcement, health and social support sectors should collaborate to discuss and develop shared solutions to:
 - Client assessment for drug and alcohol problems prior to sentencing
 - Shared policies on the application of harm reduction and abstinence based philosophies across systems including judicial, corrections and policing systems
 - Mandated treatment by the court system
 - Probation conditions enforced by the courts
- Representatives of all levels of government and sector funding organizations involved with addiction issues should work collectively to develop a shared plan of action
- Representatives of the government and sector partners should review technology used for joint management of information
- More collaboration between police, community groups and the various levels of government in responding to substance misuse in local communities

Accountability

Several drug strategies make reference to the need to implement accountability practices for treatment and addiction services. These strategies include *Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addiction Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*, the Northwest Territories *Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services*, the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse* and the Québec strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie*.

Recommendations to enhance accountability include:

- Making meaningful indicators regarding quality mental health and addiction services and population mental health status publicly available
- An implementation plan should be developed in conjunction with Health Authorities that identifies the resources (human and other) required to implement policy frameworks over the longer term
- An Accountability Framework should be implemented which develops standards, benchmarks and outcome measures for programs and reports on best practices for mental health and addictions services
- A centralized accreditation process for substance abuse programs and services should be introduced so that clients and their families can be assured of quality and trustworthy expertise
- Certification programs for community and private organizations providing treatment and lodging should be intensified (Québec)

Coordinate, Monitor and Evaluate

The successful implementation and effectiveness of a drug strategy is contingent on several processes including a coordinated approach to implementation, on-going monitoring, and an evaluation of activities. The majority of the drug strategies have incorporated reference to at least one of these processes in their respective documents.

Recommendations for coordination include:

- Establishing a "body" whether it be a single accountable agent, an advisory group or a permanent drug strategy coordinator position to coordinate the implementation of the various strategies
- Co-ordinate and integrate comprehensive policies, programs and services that address substance use at all levels including the coordination between city services, other service providers and key community stakeholders enabling neighbourhoods to deal with drug related problems

Recommendations for monitoring include:

- Overseeing and ensuring the balanced implementation of the four pillar approach; prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction
- Institutional and community-based researchers and other stakeholders should ensure efforts are targeted towards best practice-oriented research in the areas of prevention, harm reduction, treatment and enforcement

- A provincial indicator framework should be implemented to measure progress and provide results for public release

Recommendations for evaluation include:

- Funding should be secured to independently evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the strategy
- Policies and programs should be subject to ongoing evaluation concerning their effectiveness for reducing harm from alcohol and other drug problems
- The cost effectiveness of the drug strategies should be systematically evaluated
- The strategic direction of all programs and services impacting on addiction and mental health should be evaluated

As a whole, evaluation should look at the conformity of the strategy in its implementation with respect to its objectives. It should also look at any difficulties or any adjustments that need to be made. Finally it should look at the future intentions of stakeholders with respect to their goals.

Funding

The issue of funding with respect to the implementation of the drug strategy as a whole and the implementation of various components based on recommendations of the drug strategy did not appear in many of the reports. Only the *Edmonton Community Drug Strategy*, the *Manitoba Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*, the *Northwest Territories Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services* and the *Toronto Drug Strategy* made reference to issues of funding.

These references to funding include:

- Any discussion about funding sources or particular services that will receive funding
- Funding levels
- The development of an appropriate service delivery model for the drug strategy which including possible sources of funding
- Ensuring that sufficient addictions, mental health and family violence resources are allocated in a planned, needs-based manner

Provincial Methamphetamine Strategies

Research and Development

Research and development initiatives with respect to methamphetamine are particularly evident in Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'intervention sur la méthamphetamine et les autres drogues de synthèse*. This strategy recognizes the importance of increasing knowledge and also of surveying issues around synthetic drugs and particularly methamphetamine.

Recommendations include:

- Development of a scientific advisory board on synthetic drugs in Québec
- Increasing the inter-ministerial focus concerning the observation of consumption tendencies in Québec

- Formulation of an intervention targeting at risk groups for the school environment, for the police community and the community as a whole

Evaluation

The successful implementation and effectiveness of methamphetamine strategies is contingent on a process of evaluation of activities. The Québec strategy is the only one to make explicit reference to an evaluation process. Their evaluation will look at the conformity of the strategy in its implementation with respect to its objectives. It will also look at any difficulties or any adjustments that need to be made with respect to implementation. Finally, it will look at the future intentions of stakeholders with respect to their goals.

Prescription and Other Narcotic Drug Strategies

Legislative and Policy Issues

There are certain recommendations that are made by the *OxyContin Task Force Final Report* that fall under legislative and policy areas.

- Narcotics should not be prescribed outside the indications and dosing in the approved Health Canada product monographs
- The Department of Health and Community Services should be authorized to release to the police, carefully screened information on individuals suspected of engaging in criminal activity for the purposes of obtaining controlled substances
- Under the *Medical Act*, amendments should be made with respect to making records available
- Health Canada should develop and implement a formal reporting system, including an auditing component for all narcotics as outlined in the existing *Controlled Drug and Substance Act* and the *Narcotic Control Regulations*

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

The following are common trends with respect to the special populations that are targeted in the various provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies.

Provincial / Territorial and Regional Drug Strategies

Youth

While all groups deserve attention, youth are a common priority target in the majority of the provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies. It is believed that long term human and community gains will be realized by focusing attention and resources on young people.

There is a common recognition of the importance of developing prevention programs for youth. Youth programs should focus on their particular context, where young people are in their personal development, the potential dangers and immediate risks involved with substance misuse and what should be done if problems occur. It is also clear that information-only approaches are not sufficient and that young people should have input into the development of prevention programs.

Several important recommendations were made that demonstrate targeting youth is a priority in the various drug strategies and include:

- Establishing additional programs across the spectrum of prevention, early intervention, treatment and support interventions
- Implementing mechanisms to 'shore up' the capacities of families, schools and communities to address the impact of mental illness and/or addictions in children
- Developing a system process to better coordinate services, monitor outcomes and demonstrate accountability
- Developing provincial networks among service providers and other stakeholder groups to promote quality, strength and consistency among programs for youth
- Developing supports for youth stabilization including training and public awareness
- Providing different approaches to withdrawal management and ongoing treatment for youth
- Developing a resource from new and/or existing infrastructure(s) that includes youth stabilization and programming components, which link to other service sectors

Aboriginals

Several drug strategies including *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction*, *Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addiction Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*, the *Interim Report on the Mental Health and Addiction Services in NWT*, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*, the *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report* and the Québec strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie* recognize that traditional mental health and addiction services are not viewed as an effective way of improving Aboriginal

circumstances. Holistic approaches that create balance and harmony between physical, spiritual and emotional components of life need to be emphasized.

Several recommendations were made with respect including the needs of Aboriginals in the various drug strategies and they include:

- Developing partnerships with Aboriginal groups and a full recognition of Aboriginal organizations as equal partners in dealing with mental health and addiction services
- Recognizing that traditional and cultural practices are important to treatment

Women

Several drug strategies emphasize the importance of providing women, and in particular pregnant women, with strong support and specialized addiction and mental health services. The strategies that particularly target women as a special population are *Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addiction Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*, the *Ottawa Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy Initiative*, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*, *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction* and Québec's strategy, "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie*.

Older Adults

Several drug strategies provide strong support for providing older adults with specialized mental health and addiction services. These strategies include *Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addiction Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*, *The Interim Report on the Mental Health and Addiction Services in NWT*, the *Ottawa Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy Initiative* and Québec's strategy, "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie*. These strategies all recognize that as the lifespan increases, addictions and mental health issues become more prominent in the elderly age group. Depression, suicide, addiction to alcohol and gambling, and dementia are inclusive of the problems that this population could face. Education is therefore required in regard to the distinctive mental health and addiction needs, assessment and treatment, of older adults.

Provincial Methamphetamine Strategies

The *Crystal Meth and Other Amphetamines: An Integrated BC Strategy* and Québec's strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'intervention sur la méthamphetamine et les autres drogues de synthèse* target specific at-risk groups in their reports.

These groups include:

- Women of child-bearing age using methamphetamine
- Children at risk in homes where parents or other family members engage in meth use or production

- Youth and young adults, ages 14-29, who are at a high risk of engaging in meth use such as street youth, youth attending rave dance scenes, youth using meth to control weight, athletes and super achievers
- Gay men and other vulnerable populations engaged in methamphetamine use
- Sex trade workers who use methamphetamine
- Persons in rural and remote communities using methamphetamine as the primary illicit drug of choice (including Aboriginal communities)
- Offenders
- Older adults
- Injection drug users

Prescription and Other Narcotic Drug Strategies

The *OxyContin Task Force Final Report* emphasizes that prescription drug abuse is a complex issue that is characterized by a number of factors including the level and extent of use, the impact of use on self (health, vocational, educational, leisure, spiritual) and the impact of use on others (family, friends, society). Depending on how OxyContin is used, it can have an addictive effect on different populations.

Users with Prescriptions

Individuals who experience chronic malignant and non-malignant pain may be prescribed this drug by their family doctor or oncologist. For these individuals, OxyContin reduces their pain and quality of life. Depending on certain factors, as mentioned above, certain individuals can become dependent on or even addicted to OxyContin.

Youth

Information collected by the task force suggests a growing number of OxyContin abusers among the adolescent population. Experimentation involving opiates is high risk as addiction occurs much more rapidly with these drugs than with other drugs, particularly for youth.

Offenders

Within the adult corrections population, a number of individuals report addiction issues. Her Majesty's Penitentiary (HMP) staff report that approximately 30% of their population attending addictions programs experience problems with OxyContin abuse.

Street Users

Law enforcement personnel have been monitoring the growth of OxyContin as the "drug of choice" amongst street users. Police intelligence suggests that the bulk of OxyContin on the streets originates with prescriptions generated in the province.

TRENDS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

As with all areas of human service, the Canadian addictions field must answer to both its clientele and taxpayers, and aim to provide services effectively and efficiently. This challenge shared by individual practitioners, their organizations and the systems in which they operate, requires that a variety of activities and measures aimed at developing and the supporting the addictions workforce must be implemented and monitored across all levels of the service delivery platform.

Several activities and measures aimed at developing and sustaining the addictions workforce are supported by the "Building Supportive Infrastructure" priority area of the *National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances in Canada*. Working in alignment with this *National Framework* priority, CCSA's Workforce Development Division, in aiming to establish and support a national strategy on workforce development, also encourages the advancement of certain corresponding activities and measures.

The following is a summary of several provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies with respect to their current practices and future recommendations for action that support the necessary activities and measures determined by the *National Framework* and CCSA's Workforce Development Division in relation to sustaining workforce development. This document does not report on the current status of the recommendations made.

Accreditation (Program Standards)

This necessary action involves establishing standards to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery.

Alberta

- Alberta Health and Wellness should examine the need for all provincially and privately funded, not-for-profit and for-profit addictions programs and service agencies to be addictions accredited to ensure that there is adherence to standards and that the necessary funding supports are provided. (*Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*)

Québec

- The certification program for community or private organizations providing treatment and lodging should be intensified. (*"Unis dans l'action" Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie*)

Saskatchewan

- A central accreditation process for substance abuse programs and services should be introduced so that clients and their families can be assured of quality and trustworthy expertise. (*Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*)

Competencies and Certification

This necessary action involves establishing competencies and certification schemes to enhance the knowledge and skills of the members of the addictions workforce.

Newfoundland and Labrador

- Provincial standards and system initiatives have been suggested to encourage education and training and establish core competencies. (*Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addictions Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*)
- The development of a certification process for addictions counselors should be promoted. (*Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addictions Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*)

Developing Education and Training Curricula

This necessary action involves recommendations that encourage the development of education and training curricula which promote effective practices.

Alberta

- A Methamphetamine Clandestine Lab First Responders Course was developed in 2004. The Fire Commissioner's Office has produced a training video for first responders. (*Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*)
- Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Advanced Education, in conjunction with professional colleges, should implement an addiction and meth awareness, education and best practices program for health professionals, including those receiving training in a post-secondary institution. (*Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*)

Manitoba

- The development of further education and training resources for Child and Family Services (CFS) officials about the specific dangers posed to children residing in meth labs. (*Manitoba Meth Strategy*)
- Manitoba Health has provided funding for the development of training modules to train mental-health and addictions workers in co-occurring mental-health and substance-use disorders. These modules have now been distributed to regions and addictions agencies throughout the province. (*Manitoba Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*)

Newfoundland and Labrador

- The pain management curriculum should be enhanced in the undergraduate and post graduate program for all physicians and that interdisciplinary assessment and non-pharmacological interventions receive the same attention as pharmacological interventions. (*OxyContin Task Force Final Report*)

Ontario

- The City of Toronto should work with partners, such as CAMH, universities, colleges, educators and training centres to ensure that comprehensive education and training on substance use and mental health issues is included in the educational curriculum of enforcement, health, mental health and social service workers as well as part of ongoing professional development. (*Toronto Drug Strategy*)

Education and Training Opportunities

This necessary action involves providing education and training opportunities to those individuals working in the addictions field, both as specialists and as allied professionals.

Alberta

- AADAC offers training courses for staff and allied professionals (health, social services, law enforcement) that improve understanding of substance use and related problems, and increase skills in providing services). (*Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*)

British Columbia

- Providing culturally-sensitive harm reduction training such as the Healing Our Spirit with Community Health Associates of BC training for front-line Aboriginal service providers. (*Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction*)
- Providing on-line resources and training for service providers including: school counselors, child and youth workers, addictions counselors, corrections staff and police, ambulance workers physicians and nurses and private service providers. (*Crystal Meth and Other Amphetamines: An Integrated BC Strategy*)
- Facilitating the development of and access to resources and training opportunities for those working in the areas of victim services and crime prevention. (*Crystal Meth and Other Amphetamines: An Integrated BC Strategy*)
- Facilitating education and training opportunities for police and corrections staff, including youth custody centre staff, on issues related to methamphetamine use. (*Crystal Meth and Other Amphetamines: An Integrated BC Strategy*)
- Improving access for training for service providers through province wide tele-centres. (*Crystal Meth and Other Amphetamines: An Integrated BC Strategy*)

Manitoba

- Manitoba Healthy Living has organized and is leading a committee to deliver training to front line workers. Training dates have been planned for pharmacists, mental health workers, addictions workers, child and family services staff and other front line workers. There will be a significant emphasis on outreach and motivational interviewing skills included in this training. (*Manitoba Meth Strategy*)
- The Winnipeg Police service has trainers available to provide information to service providers, schools and individuals on the effects of crystal meth. They also have ongoing training for their own staff. (*Manitoba Meth Strategy*)

- The RCMP is concentrating on training efforts with partner agencies, including First Responders, Natural Resource Officers and Manitoba Hydro. More than 200 RCMP members have been trained through their provincial drug investigators course and regional conferences. (*Manitoba Meth Strategy*)
- Funding will be used to deliver suicide prevention training to staff from Regional Health Authorities (RHAs), Selkirk Mental Health Centre and addictions agencies. The five-day training sessions will qualify these staff to train others in the RHA or agency. (*Manitoba Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*)
- Funding will be provided for a one year term training position and related resource costs in the Mental Health and Addictions Branch to coordinate and facilitate training throughout the province on topics including, among others, crystal meth, acquired brain injury, suicide prevention and eating disorders. In addition ongoing funding will cover the costs of continuing training in mental health and addictions. (*Manitoba Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*)

Newfoundland and Labrador

- The Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association and the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador should take responsibility for ensuring the continuing educational initiative on chronic pain management and related addictions issues is maintained and supported on an ongoing basis. (*OxyContin Task Force Final Report*)

Northwest Territories

- A Community Wellness Worker (CWW) Training Plan should be implemented. (*Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services*)

Ontario

- The City of Toronto urges the provincial government to make funding available for ongoing supervision, training and skill development of peers working in health and social services. (*Toronto Drug Strategy*)
- The City of Toronto should develop strategies to promote more opportunities for peer workers to effectively and meaningfully work in and deliver programs. (*Toronto Drug Strategy*)

Saskatchewan

- Training should be provided to substance abuse counselors and other addictions and mental health workers in Saskatchewan's health regions. (*Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*)
- Development and implementation of a joint professional development and training strategy has been recommended for both Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region staff members and other sector organizations, aboriginal and mainstream, that are directly and indirectly involved with addicted, acquired brain injured, and persons with physical or intellectual disabilities, and mental health consumers. (*Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report*)

Yukon

- Alcohol and Drug Services in the Women's Directorate will collaborate to increase the amount of training offered to communities. (*Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*)
- Training will be offered to communities in the area of addictions and women's issues, providing counseling and how to provide support and aftercare. Training will be available to anyone interested in addictions, including First Nation Employees, community members, community health workers and nurses, physicians, justice workers and other interested persons. (*Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*)

Measurement and Evaluation

This necessary action recognized the importance of establishing performance indicators by which the effectiveness of initiatives can be monitored and measured.

British Columbia

- A system wide performance measurement should be developed, including measures of system integration and collaboration. (*Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction*)

Partnership Development

This necessary action recognizes the importance of developing partnerships to promote collaborative action by key stakeholders in the field including government, academia, regional addiction organizations, non-profit and private sectors to help ensure the ongoing availability of appropriately trained workers at all levels.

Alberta

- AADAC should strengthen its speakers' bureau to include various groups and individuals (health professionals, addictions specialists, former users) to help spread the message among front-line professionals working in the health system. (*Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*)

British Columbia

- Ongoing collaborative efforts among academic institutions, professional associations and employers are needed to ensure an integrated workforce has the knowledge, skills, resources and support to respond effectively to consumer needs. (*Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction*)
- Currently, there is no real network for prevention service providers so several opportunities for collaboration, information sharing, joint advocacy, and strategizing around common challenges are lost. Therefore, the City of Vancouver and its partners should put on an annual prevention summit that will determine key prevention directions. (*Preventing Harm from Psychoactive Substance Use*)

Newfoundland and Labrador

- Consultation networks should be developed in order for addictions experts to share their knowledge. (*Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addictions Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*)

Québec

- There should be encouragement and support for a collaboration for a cross Canada conference on the best approaches and practices for dealing with methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs. (*"Unis dans l'action" Plan d'intervention sur la méthamphétamine et les autres drogues de synthèse*)

Policies, Protocols and Program Development

This necessary action involves recommendations encouraging the advancement of sustainable, evidence-based workforce development policies and protocols.

Alberta

- The Ministry of Health and Wellness should develop and implement an effective forum for ongoing communication and joint planning to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to dealing with crystal meth and other drug addiction and health related issues in Alberta communities. (*Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*)
- Regional Health Authorities should develop and implement clear province wide protocols, based on best-practices, to address how patients who are high on meth or other drugs are managed within the hospital system. (*Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*)
- A Provincial protocol and guidelines have been developed to ensure that first line responders are informed and trained to deal with the hazards of toxic exposure encountered in meth laboratories, and to assist in the safe and appropriate cleanup of laboratories and dump sites. (*Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*)

British Columbia

- Development of an assessment and treatment protocols for methamphetamine use, including acute intoxication, methamphetamine induced psychosis, and overdose. (*Crystal Meth and Other Amphetamines: An Integrated BC Strategy*)

Manitoba

- Establishment of a specific protocol by Child and Family Services to deal with children and youth who are found in meth labs or who are known to be addicted to meth. For children who may be found in the presence of a meth lab, CFS staff will assess a child's need for protection based on the dangers presented by adults and by conditions of the environment. The necessity of a medical examination and/ or a toxicology screen will be determined on a case by case basis. For youth who may be addicted to meth, CFS will also assess the youth's need for protection and intervention, and will then be able to refer the youth to services that address the addiction, as well as attend to other factors that may

contribute to the youth's need for protection, such as housing, counseling, medical care or education. (*Manitoba Meth Strategy*)

Newfoundland and Labrador

- An approved methadone-training program should be mandatory for any physician who requests and obtains or currently holds a methadone license in the province. This training should be made available to designated pharmacists, nurses and addictions specialists who would be required to support a methadone maintenance program. (*OxyContin Task Force Final Report*)
- Ongoing program development issues should be addressed including the development of provincial skill mix guidelines for new programs such as rural case management and crisis services. (*Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addictions Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*)

Northwest Territories

- The Northern Workforce should be stable and trained to provide services at the community level. (*Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services*)

Saskatchewan

- Implementation and maintenance of a "Skills Inventory" database of the human services that will provide ongoing access to local expertise for capacity building opportunities within the community. (*Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report*)
- Continue to develop a diverse workforce within sector organizations that is adequately trained and educated regarding traditions, practices and cultural beliefs of the different customers served. (*Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report*)
- Continue to implement representative workforce programs within private sector, government, and non-governmental organizations. (*Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report*)

Promoting Professionalism in the Workforce

This necessary action involves promoting professionalism in the workforce which can be achieved through a range of mechanisms such as websites, national conferences and advanced learning institutes.

Saskatchewan

- An annual clinical conference should be hosted for the education and inspiration of those working in the addictions field in Saskatchewan. (*Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*)

Recruit and Retain Workers

This necessary action emphasizes that the need to recruit and retain care workers is crucial, especially if holistic programs are to be designed and delivered effectively.

Alberta

- Alberta Health and Wellness should increase funding to contracted agencies for staffing, specifically to increase salaries to ensure the addictions sector has the ability to recruit and retain qualified staff. (*Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*)

Manitoba

- Ongoing funding will be used to create 7.5 additional community mental health worker positions in several Regional Health Authorities across Manitoba. (*Manitoba Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*)
- Ongoing funding will provide two new outreach positions to enhance addictions services for youth. The positions will be located in Winnipeg and Thompson and the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. Outreach services have been identified as best practices for street kids who are an at-risk group for mental health and addictions issues and are unlikely to seek help at treatment centres. (*Manitoba Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*)

Newfoundland and Labrador

- The number of addictions counselors in the province should be increased. This expansion should be based on regional needs to determine the actual numbers of counselors needed in each region. (*OxyContin Task Force Final Report*)
- One youth counselor should be hired for Addiction Services in every region of the province for a total of six. (*OxyContin Task Force Final Report*)
- An addictions counselor who coordinates out of province residential treatment referrals should be hired to work with the regional outreach staff. (*OxyContin Task Force Final Report*)
- Professionals from core mental health disciplines especially psychologists and occupational therapists should be recruited and retained as they are particular challenges to the development of the workforce. (*Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addictions Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*)

Northwest Territories

- Mental Health and Addictions professionals should be recruited and retained. (*Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services*)

Ontario

- The City of Toronto is urging the provincial government to develop a health human resources plan including strategies to support organizations in the recruitment and retention of health care providers to work with people who use substances. Providers should include general practitioners, nurse practitioners, the new Family Health Teams and alternative practitioners. (*Toronto Drug Strategy*)

Saskatchewan

- The influence and diversity of volunteering, building volunteering infrastructure, increasing participation, and raising the standard of volunteer management in the addiction field should continue to be expanded. (*Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report*)

Yukon

- The Yukon Department of Health and Social Services should add additional Outreach Workers to the Alcohol and Drug Services Staff. These Outreach Workers will assist communities to develop action plans and to design and implement programs. (*Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*)

Research / Knowledge Translation

This necessary action involves research engaging with the workforce in support of the development and effective transfer of relevant knowledge.

Alberta

- The exchanging information about trends and issues, available funding, existing programs and practices, emerging issues and lessons learned from other drug coalitions should be promoted. (*Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*)

Saskatchewan

- Knowledge about substance abuse should be improved by conducting a provincial survey regarding alcohol and drug abuse and by creating a new research chair at the University of Saskatchewan and improving evaluation of substance abuse programs and data collection. (*Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*)

TRENDS RELATING TO THE *NATIONAL FRAMEWORK*

In Canada, there are currently a multitude of interventions and initiatives aimed at reducing the harm associated with alcohol, drugs and other substances. The *National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances in Canada* responded to the call for a more coordinated approach to meeting the challenges posed by the harms associated with alcohol and other drugs and substances. Answering this call requires concerted effort, collaboration and commitment from the national level to Canada's smallest communities.

In line with this collaborative approach promoted by the *National Framework* and even prior to its release in 2005, provincial, territorial and regional departments have developed strategies to address the harms associated with drugs and substances. Currently, there are only two drug strategies which have endorsed the *National Framework* in their reports, the *Toronto Drug Strategy* and the Alberta Drug Strategy which includes *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use* and *Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*. While the other drug strategies do not appear to fully endorse the *National Framework* in their reports, they have put forward several recommendations that are in line with the priorities outlined in the Framework.

A breakdown of the priority areas will demonstrate where support for the *National Framework* lies with respect to the provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies.

Priority Area 1 – Priorities to Address Specific Issues

1. Increasing Awareness and Understanding of Problematic Substance Use

Most provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies stipulate the importance of promoting awareness and understanding through education as a fundamental component of their prevention initiatives. Most strategies promote the development of public action campaigns to increase awareness of substance use and abuse. In addition, these strategies support the development of particular school curriculum for students from elementary school to high school in order to increase awareness and understanding of the harms associated with substance use and abuse.

2. Reducing Alcohol Related Harms

While not focusing specifically on alcohol, all of the provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies promote the reduction of harms associated with substance use as a fundamental principle in their reports. As demonstrated by the Alberta Drug Strategy, "A focus on reducing harm is critical, irrespective of a reduction in substance use. This reduction of harm can be accomplished through the implementation of a range of pragmatic strategies and public health interventions."

3. Addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Certain Strategies, particularly *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction* and the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* have noted the importance of addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in relation to certain prevention initiatives. Some of the prevention strategies recommended by these strategies include developing culturally responsive community based approaches to increase awareness and prevention of FASD, supporting early childhood development and families, learning how to help children with FASD in schools by having the Department of Education in British Columbia enhance its existing FASD Project that offers training and support for educators and finally, developing culturally relevant grade 1-12 curriculum on FASD for Yukon students

4. Preventing the Problematic Use of Pharmaceuticals

The Newfoundland and Labrador *OxyContin Task Force Final Report* addresses the problematic use of pharmaceuticals. This report particularly addresses the management of OxyContin and the abuse of other related narcotics. This report particularly identifies education and prevention initiatives, treatment options, harm reduction strategies and legislative and policy issues. It is currently the only report to have the problematic use of pharmaceuticals as the main focus.

5. Addressing Enforcement Issues

Although enforcement is not commonly the main focus, the majority of the provincial, territorial and regional strategies address enforcement issues to a certain extent. Enforcement covers a broad range of activities that are essential to reduce the production and trafficking of illegal drugs, prevent crimes associated with alcohol or other drugs and increase community health and safety. Common trends in enforcement in the various strategies include getting tough on drug dealers and organized crime, encouraging supply reduction, restricting access to precursors and implementing and enforcing legislative and regulatory initiatives.

Priority Area 2 – Priorities to Build Supportive Infrastructure

1. Sustaining Workforce Development

Several activities and measures aimed at developing and sustaining the addictions workforce are supported by several drug strategies. Current practices and future recommendations supported that are included in this priority are the development of program standards and accreditation, establishing competencies and certification schemes, developing education and training curricula which promote effective practices, providing education and training opportunities to those working in the addictions field, implementing measurement and evaluation initiatives, partnership development, establishing policies, protocols and program development, promoting professionalism in the workplace, recruitment and retention of care workers and research and knowledge translation. The most common activities recommended by the strategies are providing education and training opportunities to those individuals working in the addictions field, both as specialists and as allied professionals and the crucial need to recruit and retain care workers especially if holistic programs are to be designed and delivered effectively.

2. Implementing a National Research Agenda and Facilitating Knowledge Transfer

Certain strategies provide recommendations encouraging the development of a research agenda that should promote multi-disciplinary research that informs prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement initiatives and includes monitoring and evaluation components to determine whether objectives of the strategies are being met.

There are also several strategies that emphasize the importance of increasing knowledge and facilitating knowledge transfer on substance abuse and addictions including Alberta's strategy, *Stronger together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*, Saskatchewan's *Action Plan for Substance Abuse*, the *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report* and Québec's strategy, *"Unis dans l'action" Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie*.

3. Improving the Quality, Accessibility, and Range of Options to Treat Harmful Substance Use Including Substance Use Disorders

Several drug strategies emphasize the importance of improving the delivery of quality treatment services to consumers. All addiction treatment services as well as all concurrent disorder services (mental health and addictions) should be based on current evidence and reflect best practices in the field. The main recommendation with respect to improving the quality of treatment options is the need to establish a range of community-based, best practice specialized addiction and mental health/addiction services in each region that best meet the needs of the population.

Improving accessibility with respect to treatment options is addressed by the *Toronto Drug Strategy*, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*, the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*, Québec's strategy *"Unis dans l'action" Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie* and the *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report*. All of these strategies advocate the importance of providing clear, accessible, multi-lingual information to all members of the community about the full range of substance use programs and services and how to easily access them.

Improving the range of options to treat harmful substance use is addressed by several drug strategies including Alberta's strategy, *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*, *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*, the Northwest Territories *Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services*, the *Ottawa Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy Initiative* and the *Toronto Drug Strategy*. These strategies have emphasized the importance of ensuring that a continuum of services exists in their jurisdictions. Creating a continuum of care requires an array of services with many points of contact and entry into treatment in order to deal with different populations and drug users. Services include outpatient counseling, crisis services, detoxification, short and long term residential programs and overnight shelter.

4. Modernizing Legislative, Regulatory and Policy Frameworks

Several drug strategies have promoted recommendations that address modernizing legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks. The *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report* suggests that policy should be formulated that will reduce the possibility of double doctoring, over prescribing of Ritalin,

prescription drug abuse and better use of drug plan information to flag previously prescribed medication history for patients.

In addition, several strategies have included reference to the implementation and enforcement of certain pieces of legislation in their reports. Reference is made to implementing *The Drug Endangered Children's Act* by Alberta's strategy *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use* and Manitoba's *Framework for Addressing the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs*. The *Youth Drug Stabilization Act* was implemented by Manitoba and referenced in the *Manitoba Health and Addictions Strategy*. Similar legislation has also been implemented by Saskatchewan. *The Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act* was implemented in Alberta and British Columbia and is referenced in Alberta's strategy *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use* and *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver* respectively. The *Safer Neighbourhoods and Communities Act* was referenced by the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* and the *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*.

The various provincial strategies targeting methamphetamine use and abuse have also promoted several recommendations that address modernizing legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks, particularly with respect to restricting precursors and increasing penalties for methamphetamine related offences. Several strategies emphasize the need to create a new policy to restrict access to methamphetamine precursors, particularly ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. Additionally, health representatives from the Western provinces agree that a phased-in approach to restricting access to precursors in the illicit manufacture of crystal meth is required. The Western provinces are working together in order to urge the federal government to create a new offence for possession of precursors for the purpose of meth production. Finally, several strategies have included reference to implementation and enforcement of legislation dealing with methamphetamine related offences in their reports.

Priority Area 3 – Priorities to Address the Needs of Key Populations

1. Focusing on Children and Youth

While all groups deserve attention, youth are a common priority target in the majority of the provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies. It is believed that long term human and community gains will be realized by focusing attention and resources on young people.

There is a common recognition among the strategies of the importance of developing prevention programs for youth. Youth programs should focus on their particular context, where young people are in their personal development, the potential dangers and immediate risks involved with substance misuse and what should be done if problems occur. It is also clear that information-only approaches are not sufficient and that young people should have input into the development of prevention programs.

2. Reaching Out to Canada's North

Three drug strategies were developed that reach out to Canada's North, the Northwest Territories *Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services*, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan* and the *Nunavut Addictions and Mental Health Strategy*. All three strategies recognize that the North differs from the rest of the country in some important ways concerning substance use and addiction. As a result, solutions to substance abuse must reflect the cultural diversity of the North, and in particular First Nation cultures and traditions.

The Northwest Territories *Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addiction Services* particularly recognizes the importance of reaching out to the North with respect to education and training initiatives. Recruiting and retaining qualified workers is challenging to the North. Care Providers are the key to supporting and delivering an integrated service delivery model. The strategy recommends implementing initiatives to ensure that the Northern Workforce is stable and trained to provide services at the community level.

3. Supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Communities in Addressing Their Needs

Several drug strategies including *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction*, *Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addiction Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*, the *Interim Report on the Mental Health and Addiction Services in NWT*, the *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*, the *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report* and the Québec strategy "*Unis dans l'action*" *Plan d'action interministériel en toxicomanie* recognize that traditional mental health and addiction services are not viewed as an effective way of improving aboriginal circumstances. Holistic approaches that create balance and harmony between physical, spiritual and emotional components of life need to be emphasized.

4. Responding to Offender Related Issues

There are several drug strategies which address treatment services in connection with the criminal justice system and respond to offender related issues. These strategies support alcohol and other drug programming that takes into account the unique issues and circumstances that affect those in connection with the criminal justice system.

Several recommendations were made to respond to offender related issues and include expanding and increasing the availability of drug treatment options in prisons to include methadone maintenance therapy for any inmate with an opiate addiction and establishing comprehensive release and follow-up care plans before offenders are released back into the community.

Additionally, there are several drug strategies that emphasize the importance of developing Drug Treatment Courts as an alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders. The offenders would instead participate in a supervised specialized addiction treatment program. The regions that currently have Drug Treatment Courts are Toronto, Vancouver, Ottawa, Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg.

CONCLUSION

All of the provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies that were reviewed have acknowledged that the use and abuse of substances is a problem with serious health, social and economic consequences and that there are many negative effects of substance abuse on individuals, families and communities. These various strategies were developed as a result of the actions taken by government ministries and departments, law enforcement agencies, municipalities, professional organizations and community groups to address the use and abuse of various substances.

Several common trends from these provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies with respect to initiatives in prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction were explained. Other common trends relating to the underlying principles and priorities of the strategies were identified as well as trends relating to the actual implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategies. Common trends with respect to special populations were also identified and addressed.

The most common recommendation made by the various drug strategies relates to the development of a comprehensive prevention and education plan for youth, which is also the most common target population. This prevention and education plan would address identified gaps by developing appropriate school curriculum to address the issue, supporting families and family functioning and improving access to local information for local addiction services. This plan would also be aligned with other provincial, territorial and federal initiatives.

In addition, a summary was provided that reviewed all of the various drug strategies with respect to their current practices and future recommendations for action that support activities and measures aimed at developing and sustaining the addictions workforce. The most common activities recommended by the strategies are providing education and training opportunities to those individuals working in the addictions field, both as specialists and as allied professionals and the crucial need to recruit and retain care workers especially if holistic programs are to be designed and delivered effectively.

Finally, common trends among the various drug strategies with respect to the priorities set out in the *National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances in Canada* were addressed. Currently, there are only two drug strategies which have endorsed the *National Framework* in their reports, the *Toronto Drug Strategy* and the Alberta Drug Strategy which includes *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use* and *Stronger Together: Coordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*. While the other drug strategies do not appear to fully endorse the *National Framework* in their reports, because they were developed before its release in 2005, several recommendations were put forward that demonstrate that the strategies are in line with the priorities outlined in the Framework.

The purpose of this report was to provide information on the common trends with respect to current actions and future recommendations for various provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies. By generating and increasing knowledge on common trends, a starting point may be provided for discussion on the development of collaborative and comprehensive provincial, territorial and regional drug strategies.

APPENDIX
LIST OF DRUG STRATEGIES

Provincial / Territorial and Regional Drug Strategies

Alberta

- *Stronger Together: A Provincial Framework for Action on Alcohol and Other Drug Use*
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC), October 2005

Edmonton

- *Edmonton Community Drug Strategy*
Edmonton Community Drug Strategy Steering Committee, City of Edmonton, May 2005

British Columbia

- *Every Door is the Right Door: A British Columbia Planning Framework to Address Problematic Substance Use and Addiction*
Ministry of Health Services, Government of British Columbia, May 2004

Vancouver

- *A Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Drug Problems in Vancouver*
City of Vancouver, April 2001
- *Preventing Harm from Psychoactive Substance Abuse*
City of Vancouver Drug Policy Program, November 2005

Manitoba

- *Manitoba's Framework for Addressing the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs*
Mental Health and Addictions, Manitoba Healthy Living, Draft December 2006
- *Manitoba Mental Health and Addictions Strategy*
Manitoba Healthy Living, December 2005

Newfoundland and Labrador

- *Working Together for Mental Health: A Provincial Policy Framework for Mental Health and Addiction Services in Newfoundland and Labrador*
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, October 2005

Northwest Territories

- *Framework for Action: Mental Health and Addictions Services*
Department of Health and Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories, June 2004
- *Interim Report on the Mental Health and Addiction Services*
Department of Health and Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories, December 2005

Nunavut

- *Addictions and Mental Health Strategy*
Health and Social Services, Government of Nunavut, undated

Ontario

Ottawa

- *The Ottawa Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy Initiative*
Community Network for the Integrated Drugs and Addictions Strategy, City of Ottawa, 2006

Toronto

- *The Toronto Drug Strategy*
City of Toronto, October 2005

Québec

- *"Unis dans l'action" Plan d'action interministérielle en toxicomanie*
Ministry of Health and Social Services, Government of Québec, 2006

Saskatchewan

- *Premier's Project Hope: Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Substance Abuse*
Government of Saskatchewan, August 2005

Regina

- *Regina and Area Drug Strategy Report*
Regina and Area Drug Strategy Reference Committee, June 2003

Yukon

- *Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan*
Department of Justice, Government of Yukon, October 2005

Provincial Methamphetamine Strategies

Alberta

- *Stronger Together: Co-ordinated Alberta Response to Methamphetamine*
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC), April 2006 (Second Edition)

British Columbia

- *Crystal Meth and Other Amphetamines: An Integrated BC Strategy*
Minister of State for Mental Health and Addiction Services, Government of British Columbia, August 2004

Manitoba

- *Manitoba Meth Strategy*
Manitoba Meth Task Force, undated

Québec

- *"Unis dans l'action" Plan d'intervention sur la méthamphétamine et les autres drogues de synthèse*
Ministry of Health and Social Services, Government of Québec, 2006

Prescription and Other Narcotic Drug Strategies

Newfoundland and Labrador

- *OxyContin Task Force Final Report*
Department of Health and Community Services, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, June 2004