

Forging Connections, Igniting Change



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

2023–2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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ISSN 1705-1177

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Forging Connections, Igniting Change

Individuals, families and communities across Canada are facing significant harms from the ongoing drug toxicity crisis and other substance use health challenges. The personal and consequential nature of these issues often divides and isolates. But discovering real solutions depends on coming together and hearing from everyone — and it is from moments of human connection that many find the energy and inspiration to drive change.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) fostered that unity and those moments in 2023–2024 by leading a host of impactful events on key substance use health matters. Together with our partners, we created inclusive spaces for people with different perspectives and backgrounds to connect, identify common ground and move forward together.

Chair's Message



As part of its national leadership on substance use health, CCSA has long acted as a convenor, assembling partners, researchers, service providers, policy makers, people with lived and living experience, and other interested parties. Together, we collectively investigate and advance solutions that address substance-related harms. Last year, our organization served in this role perhaps more than it ever has before through the 2023 Issues of Substance conference; the National Family and Prevention Summit; the First Nations, Métis and Inuit National Partnership Roundtable; and other high-impact events.

Along with mobilizing knowledge and sharing best practices related to substance use health, these events gave people opportunities to connect face to face. That is vital for a human service like ours. Seeing and recognizing the humanity in everyone is crucial to end the stigma of substance use for good.

The people we bring together do not always share perspectives. Participants may disagree fundamentally on the causes of substance use disorders or whether harm reduction or abstinence-based approaches hold more promise. With a safe place to have those conversations, people can gain mutual understanding, find common ground and work together in the service of everyone in Canada who uses substances or is affected by substance use.

Voices that have often been marginalized must be empowered to participate in those discussions — and in all of CCSA's work. In support of this, last year we co-designed projects with people who have lived and living experience of substance use and advanced our new Indigenous partnerships strategy.

Events and initiatives such as these are critical to the efforts of CCSA and others in the substance use and addiction landscape. The issues we confront are community issues, and it will take a community to address them. For our part, we will continue to engage with as many people as possible who are interested in the subject and create spaces that ensure a safe, beneficial experience for all.


As well as guiding the planning of the Issues of Substance 2023 conference and other events, the Board's focus during the last fiscal year was on the public response to [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health](#); policy developments amid the fifth anniversary of [Canada's Cannabis Act](#); and CCSA's equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives. We will continue to monitor and advise on these areas going forward and ensure alignment with [CCSA's 2021–2026 strategic plan](#).

In 2023, we bid farewell to Audrey MacFarlane of Alberta, a Board member who completed her tenure and whose contributions have had a lasting impact. We thank her for the time and insights she shared so generously. We also welcomed Sandy Pitzel of Saskatchewan, who brings more than 30 years of experience in human services and social work and is a member of the English River Dene Nation.

On behalf of the Board, I extend our thanks to Health Canada for their continued support, to CCSA's leadership team and staff for their dedication and to our partners and supporters for their contributions. Together, we will continue to face challenges with courage, field razor-sharp questions with open minds and forge connections that ignite change on substance use health in communities across the country.

Vaughan Dowie
Chair, CCSA Board of Directors

CEO's Message



Toxic drug poisoning deaths and drug-related harms in Canada continue to climb. Healthcare workers face high levels of stress and burnout. Communities across the country feel unsafe or unheard. Pain and fear stemming from struggles like these are behind many of the divisions that hinder progress on substance use health. But these issues are too important and too far-reaching to let polarization prevent collaboration. Empowered by the right forum and the right context, we can focus on our shared purpose — to improve health for all people in Canada and their families.

There is no stronger example of this from the past fiscal year than our 2023 Issues of Substance conference. We convened participants from across the country with a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds. We spared no effort to create a space that was safe, inclusive and favourable to openness and productive dialogue — guided by people with lived and living experience; First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations; academics; and other partners. What took place over three days in Vancouver was heartening. Attendees brought humility, understanding and compassion. People having an open mind toward different ideas and experiences was a joy to see and extremely constructive in helping address the needs of people in Canada who use substances.

Feedback after the conference was just as encouraging. Participants from across Canada left with fresh insights, strategies and tools they can apply to their own programs, organizations or jurisdictions to enhance their impact. Many said they had plans to alter their practice or organization based on what they heard or to pursue an opportunity to collaborate. In a field focused by necessity on deaths and harms, the chance to join hands and work together — to connect with others face to face — was energizing and uplifting.

The same care and intention that underpinned the success of the conference yielded similar results across other CCSA-led gatherings in 2023–2024, such as the National Family and Prevention Summit and the inaugural First Nations, Métis and Inuit National Partnership Roundtable. We will continue to apply and refine our

approach going forward, supported by our status as a national, neutral, arm's-length organization that is a trusted source of knowledge and expertise informed by science, evidence, and lived and living experience.

We will also find new ways to work even more closely with experts, whether by academic credentials or lived and living experience. By making sense of the evidence and sharing guidance and tools, we will empower the participation of a broader set of audiences touched by substance use health matters, including families, communities and municipalities.

I want to thank our partners and funders for supporting our work. I am incredibly touched that so many people in the field and governments of all stripes have been so receptive of our big-tent approach. I also want to offer sincere thanks to CCSA's staff for their inspiring commitment and dedication to our cause, and to the Board for their continued mentorship and guidance. Finally, thank you to everyone who contributed to our work and participated in our events, and those who shared their personal stories. By connecting and learning from each other, we can continue to inspire and bring lasting change to individuals, families and communities.

Dr. Alexander Caudarella,
MDCM CCFP AM ABAM(d)
Chief Executive Officer

Building Connections and Sharing Evidence Across Canada





Events

- Métis National Mental Health and Cannabis Workshop (Vancouver, B.C., May 2023)
- Drug Checking Symposium (Vancouver, B.C., October 2023)
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit Partnership Building Roundtable (Charlottetown, P.E.I., October 2023)
- National Family and Prevention Summit (Charlottetown, P.E.I., October 2023)
- Issues of Substance 2023 conference (Vancouver, B.C., November 2023)
- Atlantic Canada Roundtable on *Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health* (St. John's, N.L., January 2024)
- Two-day working meeting on standard THC unit implementation (Toronto, Ont., March 2024)
- Inuit Health Synergy Sessions (Ottawa, Ont., throughout 2023–2024)
- Substance Use Experience Collective (Ottawa, Ont., throughout 2023–2024)
- National Suicide Prevention Conference (Halifax, N.S., May 2023)
- Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care's Annual Report to the Community (Penetanguishene, Ont., June 2023)
- ITE Canada/CARSP 2023 Joint Conference (Canadian Association of Road Safety Professionals) (Winnipeg, Man., June 2023)
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Public Health Task Group (virtual, September 2023)
- Canadian Chamber of Commerce (Ottawa, Ont., August 2023)
- CAPSA (Community Addictions Peer Support Association) Working on Wellness Festival (Ottawa, Ont., September 2023)
- Canadian Association of Hepatology Nurses Annual Conference (Calgary, Alta., September 2023)
- Family Medicine Conference (Regina, Sask., September 2023)
- Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario (virtual, September 2023)



Presentations

- B.C. Substance Use Conference (British Columbia Centre on Substance Use) (Vancouver, B.C., April 2023)
- Business Council of Canada (Ottawa, Ont., April 2023)
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business (Ottawa, Ont., May 2023)
- Dalhousie University (Halifax, N.S., May 2023)
- Métis Nation Mental Health and Cannabis Workshop (Ottawa, Ont., May 2023)
- Stress, Trauma and Resilience Symposium (Ottawa, Ont., September 2023)
- Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation Community of Practice Event (Victoria, B.C., October 2023)
- Canadian Psychiatric Association Annual Conference (Vancouver, B.C., October 2023)
- Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine Scientific Conference (Victoria, B.C., October 2023)
- Innovations in the Science of Cannabis Conference (Hamilton, Ont., October 2023)

- Moyo Health and Community Services (Peel, Ont., November 2023)
- North Bay Regional Health Centre Speaker Series (North Bay, Ont., November 2023)
- University of Toronto, Temerty Faculty of Medicine (Toronto, Ont., December 2023)



Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health Advertising Campaigns

- Ottawa, Ont.
- Toronto, Ont.
- Gatineau, Que.
- Quebec City, Que.
- Vancouver, B.C.



CCENDU Sites

- B.C. Centre for Disease Control (Vancouver, B.C.)
- Shared Health (multiple locations, Manitoba)
- Thunder Bay Drug Strategy (Thunder Bay, Ont.)
- Toronto Public Health (Toronto, Ont.)
- Institut national de santé publique du Québec (Quebec City, Que.)
- Nova Scotia Health Authority (Halifax, N.S.)
- Eastern Health (Newfoundland and Labrador)



Coming Together for Change at Issues of Substance 2023

For CCSA's Issues of Substance 2023 conference, we engaged participants with diverse and even opposing views to spark action on substance use health across Canada. The potential for conflict due to differing ideologies did not deter us. Instead, we worked to create a forum for people of all opinions and backgrounds to assemble, safely share their diverse perspectives, discover their common goals and move forward together. The result was our most inspiring, inclusive and impactful conference to date, spreading insights and fostering partnerships that will promote better outcomes across jurisdictions.

Over three days in November 2023, representatives from coast to coast to coast came together in Vancouver to learn, share and discuss ways to improve outcomes for people in Canada living with substance use health and mental health issues. Among them were addictions and mental health workers, Indigenous community representatives, healthcare professionals, researchers, policy makers and knowledge brokers. It was the first Issues of Substance conference to take a distinctions-based approach. A First Nations Elder opened the conference with a prayer through traditional song and drumming. A Métis, Kokum Deni, spoke at the start of the second day. An Inuit Elder delivered a final keynote to close the event. It was also the highest-attended

standalone CCSA conference and proof that harm reduction and abstinence advocates — regardless of their different ideas, opinions and experiences — can collaborate harmoniously on a national scale to better substance use health.

People with lived and living experience of substance use and their families made up 12 per cent of participants and more than 25 of these individuals shared their personal stories as part of the program. Other attendees cited these contributions as highlights of the conference and vital for combatting stigma and informing change.


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“I loved being in the same place with so many people who care about those impacted by substance use health, gambling and mental health issues. It inspired me and energized me to do better.”

—Issues of Substance 2023 conference attendee

Foundations for Productive Dialogue

The conference was the culmination of more than a year of planning by CCSA staff and external partners, including representatives from other pan-Canadian health organizations, academics, service providers, members of Indigenous communities and people with lived and living experience of substance use. We introduced a new kind of committee for this conference, dedicated to making it a safe, inclusive space for attendees with lived and living experience. Composed of people who use or have used substances, this committee guided many of the features that contributed to the conference’s success. This included on-site practical and emotional supports, a room with harm reduction supplies, [a guidebook listing nearby services and supports](#), and taxi chits so participants could travel to them.

Sharing Strategies and Insights from Across Canada

Attendees left the conference reporting that they felt inspired, hopeful and equipped to enhance the impact of their work based on what they heard. Responses to our evaluation surveys were overwhelmingly positive with 93 per cent agreeing it was relevant to their work, 91 per cent agreeing that the conference was appropriate for them and 89 per cent reporting that they would recommend future conferences to others.

Issues of Substance 2023 in numbers

818
attendees

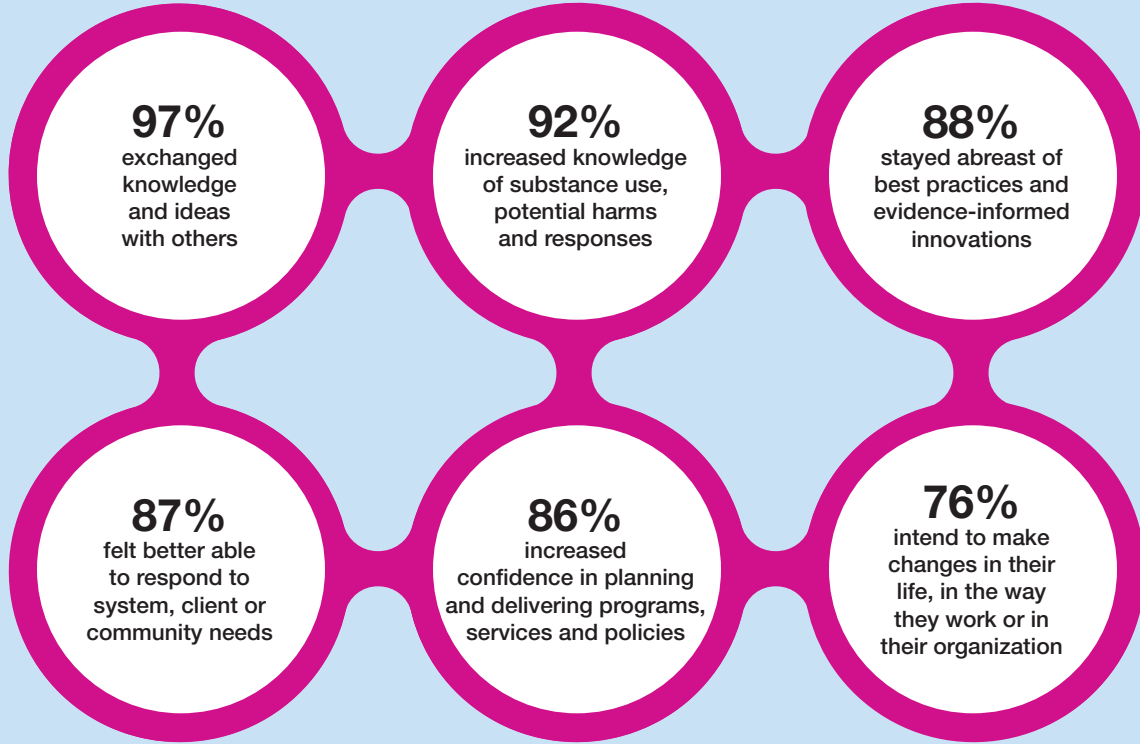
more than
125
presentations

15
keynote
speakers

more than
115
research
posters

8
workshops

Attendee surveys: Impact at a glance



Looking Ahead to the Issues of Substance 2025 Conference

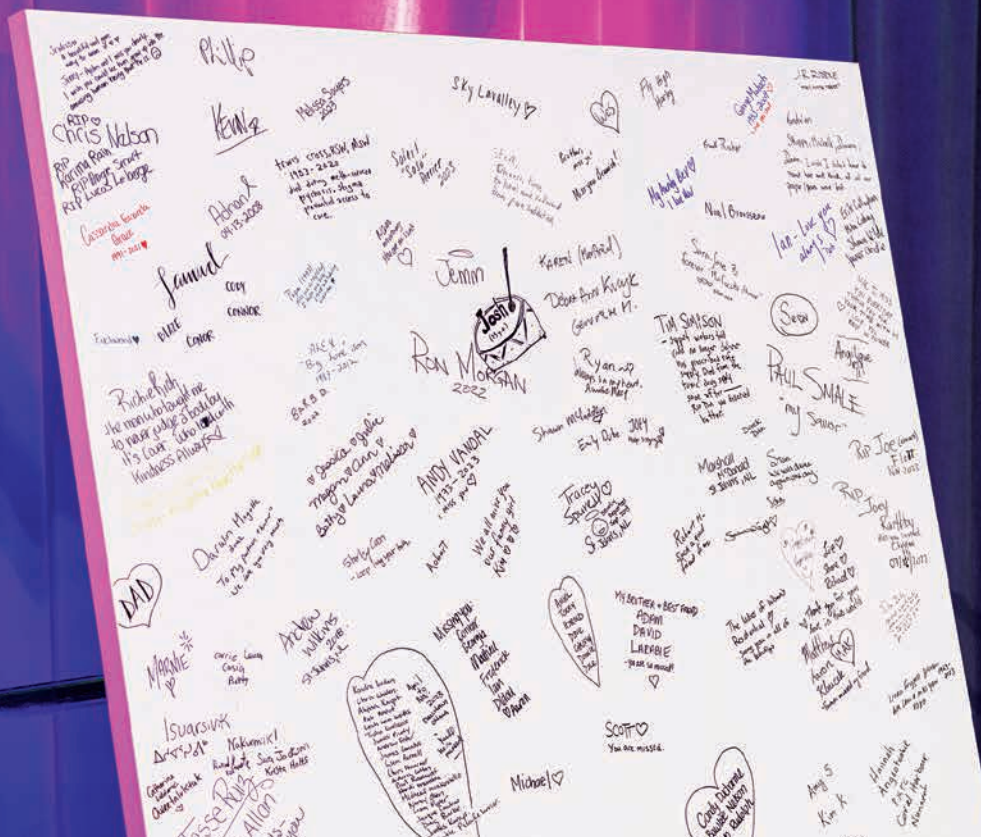
Our 2023 event demonstrated that creating welcoming spaces and focusing on outcomes is the way to positive change. We will carry forward this principle as we plan for Issues of Substance 2025 and apply attendees' feedback to help us make an even greater impact. We aim to further increase participation of people with lived or living experience and engage partners in the co-design process earlier.

Twenty sponsors supported the conference, including the Mental Health Commission of Canada as the national sponsor and the Government of British Columbia as the provincial sponsor. **More than 35 exhibitors** contributed to our exhibit hall, including national and local organizations, governments, treatment centres, research foundations and educators.

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“The conference made me reflect on some of the stigma and negative perceptions I’ve been holding on to. I will apply a lens of openness going forward.”

—Issues of Substance 2023 conference attendee



During the conference, we invited attendees to add words and imagery to a **memorial wall** to honour people lost to substance use. The two canvases are now on display in CCSA’s offices in Ottawa — a visible reminder of the importance of our work and commitment to improving the health and safety of people in Canada who use substances.



Creating Spaces to Drive Collective Action

Meaningful progress on matters of such scale and consequence demands individuals, families, communities, organizations, policy makers and others working together to find solutions. We enabled that collaboration last year across several events on priority topics. These events empowered participants to connect and contribute their perspectives on how to support families of people who use substances, change the conversation on alcohol and health in their region, improve life-saving drug checking services, advance the implementation of a standard THC unit and more.

Families can play a significant role in preventing drug-related harms to people who use substances. Exploring that role — and how to empower families to fulfill it — was the focus of the National Family and Prevention Summit held in October 2023 in Charlottetown, P.E.I., as part of our Strategies to End Substance Use Crises series. Organized in partnership with the PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being, the summit brought together subject-matter experts, people with lived and living experience, and other representatives from across the country. A dinner

before the summit featured guest speeches by Dennis King, Premier of Prince Edward Island, and Ya'ara Saks, Canada's Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Together, summit participants developed calls to action and recommendations to guide policy development at all levels of government. The discussions at and the reports produced from the event will be foundational to future engagement with summit participants, which will inform CCSA's knowledge mobilization activities by exploring the impacts we have already made.

A Regional Roundtable on the Health Risks of Alcohol Use

In January 2024, we led a roundtable on *Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health* in St. John's, N.L., to determine how best to mobilize the latest evidence on the health risks of alcohol consumption in Atlantic Canada. It was the first in a series of planned regional roundtables on the new guidance, recognizing that cultures, needs and priorities vary across the country.

The Atlantic Canada roundtable included health professionals, policy makers, service providers, community members and representatives from

First Nations and Inuit communities in the region. As well as informing our knowledge mobilization activities, the event was an opportunity for participants to learn more about the new guidance and to connect with others in the alcohol and health space. Participants shared insights into priority audiences for the guidelines, what kind of messaging is most likely to resonate in the region, how to equip service providers to share the information and next steps for their organizations and CCSA. The roundtable inspired multiple collaborations that will help people in Atlantic Canada make informed decisions about their alcohol consumption.





“The Drug Checking Symposium last fall was a fantastic opportunity to bring together people from across Canada to share new ideas and information. It helped foster a better understanding of the differences in the unregulated drug supply across the country and brought us together to talk about innovations and learn from each other.”

— **Jennifer Matthews**, *Drug Checking Implementation Lead*
British Columbia Centre on Substance Use

Helping Drug Checking Service Providers Save More Lives

Evidence suggests drug checking services can prevent harm. In October 2023, we hosted a three-day symposium in Vancouver in partnership with the [British Columbia Centre on Substance Use](#) and the [Drug Resource and Education Project](#). The event gave participants interested in drug checking a forum to share tools, resources and expertise, and to advance efforts toward a cohesive, sustainable drug checking approach for use across the country. Post-event surveys were positive, with all respondents agreeing that the symposium met its stated objectives and that they would apply what they learned in their work. Descriptions of the panels and presentations are available in our [Drug Checking Symposium 2023 Report: October 5–7, 2023](#).

The symposium continued the work of the National Drug Checking Working Group, which was formed in 2015 in response to a recommendation from a CCSA-led event on drug- and alcohol-related harms. CCSA will work to address recommendations that participants identified to help protect people in Canada from toxic drugs.

We led **10 online focus groups with people who reported frequent non-medical cannabis use** to gain insight into their habits and motivations. The findings will inform future cannabis regulations and public health initiatives that aim to reduce cannabis-related harms in Canada.

Perspectives on Standard THC Unit Implementation in Canada

A standardized way of measuring concentrations of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in cannabis would make it possible to assess the risks, benefits and harms of cannabis and cannabis-derived products more accurately. In March 2024, we hosted a two-day, in-person meeting with national and international experts and partners to further inform implementation of a standard THC unit for Canada. Participants brought varied perspectives on topics including what the unit should be set at, how the unit should appear on product labels and who should be engaged with at each stage of implementation. The diversity of viewpoints contributed to a more nuanced understanding that will support effective implementation of the THC unit in policy development, research and data analysis, public education and other contexts.

The working meeting was just one of several ways CCSA continued to provide leadership on THC unit implementation in Canada. We also submitted evidence and perspectives supporting the importance of a standard unit to the expert panel conducting the legislative review of Canada's *Cannabis Act*. CCSA staff also co-authored [Canada's THC unit: Applications for the legal cannabis market](#). This journal article synthesizes evidence and provides an overview of considerations specific to Canada. During *Issues of Substance 2023*, we hosted a panel discussion to raise awareness of how a standard THC unit could be applied.

With Canada seeing an increase in children hospitalized due to accidental cannabis poisoning, we consulted with researchers and partners to create a ***Pediatric Cannabis Poisoning Stakeholder Toolkit***. The toolkit gives organizations information and tools to raise awareness of the dangers of leaving cannabis edibles in reach of children.



“CCSA organized and facilitated a brilliant and timely event on the standard THC unit. They brought together a diverse range of experts from across Canada and the world to map out pathways for impact.”

— **Tom Freeman**, Director, Addiction and Mental Health Group
Department of Psychology, University of Bath, United Kingdom



Enhancing Inclusion of Marginalized Voices

Too often the perspectives of marginalized communities are excluded from relevant research, national policy discussions, knowledge dissemination and program development. Last year, we advanced efforts to better include and engage with more diverse groups — an important step forward in a country as culturally varied as Canada.

Fiscal year 2023–2024 marked the first full year of CCSA's [Indigenous Partnerships Strategic Framework](#). Under the leadership of our Director of Indigenous Partnerships, we created a framework that supports the development of strong, collaborative relationships between CCSA and First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations across Canada. Its principles will further [our commitment to the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#), and foster partnerships that help empower First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples to reclaim sovereignty over policies and approaches to substance use in their communities.

Guided by the new framework, we advanced our learning journey and path toward reconciliation last year through a range of activities.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

A health system with equitable access to services and supports for all health conditions, including substance use, that privilege Indigenous ways of knowing and are trauma-informed, and have health and related systems that honour Indigenous experiences and strong medicine societies of Indigenous Peoples.

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“Being on the CCSA working group [Substance Use Experience Collective], I was able to meet and have valuable discussions with partners across Canada. We need to hear from people everywhere, and this gave that opportunity to hear from all.”

—*Antoinette Gravel-Ouellette, Program Coordinator*
Moms Stop the Harm

We collaborated on research, presented data and engaged in discussions about cannabis, alcohol and other substance use health matters with Métis and Inuit community representatives. We engaged with Indigenous communities and organizations for CCSA-led national events, including the Issues of Substance 2023 conference and the National Family and Prevention Summit. CCSA staff also took part in four reconciliation activities focused on historical and contemporary issues affecting Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The learnings will inform our plans and activities going forward.

Roundtable for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Partnerships

In October 2023, we hosted the inaugural First Nations, Métis and Inuit Partnership Building Roundtable to gather insights on how we can support Indigenous people and organizations in reducing substance use harms in their communities. Recognizing that pan-Indigenous initiatives do not work, we took a distinctions-based approach that respects the unique cultures, needs and priorities of each nation. Participants shared perspectives on CCSA's priorities and projects,

substance use issues and our Indigenous Partnerships Strategic Framework. The gathering produced 16 recommendations that will help CCSA establish meaningful, long-term partnerships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations.

As one of seven priorities in our Indigenous Partnerships Strategic Framework, this annual roundtable will foster connections and productive discussions between CCSA and members of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities about Canada's substance use crisis — which disproportionately affects Indigenous people — and how partnership could support each group.



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“I am grateful for the support CCSA has given me over the years, which helped shape my perspectives and research. I am delighted to see how CCSA is increasingly engaging with people who use drugs in its activities, including the last Issues of Substance conference.”

—*Jane Buxton, O.B.C, MBBS, MHSc, FRCPC,*
Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Medicine
University of British Columbia

More Meaningful Engagement with People with Lived and Living Experience

People with lived and living experience of substance use have first-hand knowledge of the impacts of substance use and addiction on themselves and the people around them — insights that are integral to improving outcomes. To help amplify such critical voices, we undertook projects and initiatives last year to enhance inclusion of people with lived and living experience in CCSA activities.

To guide our efforts toward more meaningful engagement, we formed the Substance Use Experience Collective, an amalgamation of our Lived Experience, Living Experience, and Family and Friends committees. Together with CCSA staff, the group informed the development of a toolkit for engaging people with lived and living experience in our activities, helping establish the first CCSA-wide process of its kind.

Substance use patterns and goals can look different from one person to the next, which can lead to disagreement and passionate exchanges. Recognizing this, for each initiative we took steps to ensure a supportive, respectful and open environment for people with different viewpoints and identities. Through these efforts, we were able to create safe, productive forums for people with lived and living experience to gather, share their thoughts, build connections and discover common goals.

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“My personal and professional experience with CCSA has been an eye-opener, and the shift to meeting people where they are at has improved.”

—*Frank Crichlow*
Harm Reduction Worker,
COUNTERfit Harm Reduction



Celebrating 35 Years of Progress on Substance Use and Addiction

Last year marked three and a half decades since an act of Parliament created CCSA to serve as a national leader on substance use and to advance solutions that help address alcohol- and other drug-related harms. We commemorated the anniversary with retrospective content and reflected on our legacy as we continued to advance initiatives with roots in our earliest days.

To celebrate 35 years of improving substance use health for people in Canada, we undertook several initiatives to highlight different ways our work has made an impact. That included sharing stories about our efforts to reduce the stigma faced by people experiencing substance use disorders and to amplify the voices of lived and living experience through partnership, as well as the impact of the [CCSA-led Brain Builders Lab](#) and [Improving Treatment Together Project](#).

We also produced four videos highlighting our work over the years, covering the history of CCSA, working with people with lived or living experience, cannabis and opioids. In September 2023, we held an open house where people could hear about recent developments in two of our most impactful projects: [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health](#) and the [Canadian Substance Use Costs and Harms \(CSUCH\)](#) project.

Raising Awareness of the Health Impacts of Alcohol

Published in January 2023, *Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health* replaced the 2011 *Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines* with updated advice based on the latest evidence to help people in Canada make more informed decisions about alcohol consumption. It also includes updated methods to measure the evidence from more data sources that provided a clearer picture of the harms related to alcohol. The publication follows decades of CCSA research, analysis and knowledge mobilization on alcohol and its related harms.

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“In addition to being a repository of well-synthesized evidence and tools, CCSA is a national leader, setting the direction of our thinking about reducing substance-related harms in Canada.”

— **Maggie Kuo,**

*Manager, Harm Reduction Epidemiologist
Public Health Agency of Canada*

Last fall, we ran a three-week national advertising campaign to raise awareness of *Canada’s Guidance on Alcohol and Health* and further spread its message that drinking less is better for your health. The campaign slogan and concept — Drink Less, Live More — encouraged the public to consider reducing their alcohol consumption in favour of healthier activities. We followed that with a six-week campaign on the guidance aimed at policy makers. These efforts were further amplified through a series of digital campaigns on LinkedIn, iPolitics and other online spaces in partnership with Southwestern Public Health and the Middlesex-London Health Unit. Collectively, the campaigns drew more than 29 million impressions and 27,000 clicks. We also created the website DrinkLessLiveMore.ca to promote the new guidance and share its key takeaways. The website had more than 40,000 downloads of our [communications toolkit](#).

A Spotlight on the Economic Impact of Substance Use

The first iteration of the CSUCH study was released in 2006. Our work exploring the impacts of substance use on Canada’s economy goes back even further to the 1990 Business Leaders Committee in Toronto.

That ground-breaking summit led by CCSA rallied the private sector to help address substance use and addiction. With the most recent update, the CSUCH study includes data on the costs and harms of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, opioids and other drugs from 2007 to 2020 — bringing the total estimated cost in Canada to \$49.1 billion in 2020, including lost productivity, health care, criminal justice and other direct costs.

To inform discussions about the economic toll of substance use in Canada, we promoted the recent update to the CSUCH study through digital and print ads, social media and email campaigns, and an op-ed with HealthCareCAN published in [Policy Options](#) and [Hospital News](#). We also gave presentations to the Business Council of Canada, Canadian Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses to encourage sharing the data with their members. Collectively, those associations represent 1.7 million employees and more than 295,000 businesses.

Substance Use Workforce Competencies for Prescribers

Our development of competencies for the substance use workforce began in 2004, when it was identified as a national priority. The first version of the technical competencies was released in 2007 and the first behavioural competencies in 2010. Since then, we have continued to consult with subject-matter experts, advisory groups and people with lived and living experience and their families to reflect current best practices, knowledge, skills and language.

As part of our ongoing work to support the consistent delivery of evidence-based substance use health services across settings, we led the development of [technical and behavioural workforce competencies for prescribers](#). The Standards Council of Canada contracted CCSA to lead the work, which will promote a base level of proficiency for professionals who are not specialized in substance use and addiction but may offer substance use support as part of their

prescribing duties. We also finished work on a [workforce competencies website](#), which makes the resources more accessible to partners and organizations, contributing to higher quality substance use health services for the people who need them.

CCSA's policy briefs were our contribution of expertise leading up to and following the legalization of non-medical cannabis use in Canada.

This year CCSA submitted **six policy briefs for the federal consultation on cannabis legislation**. Through emails and multimedia campaigns, we shared them with partners, parliamentary committees and other interested parties.

Since the 1990s, Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (CCENDU) bulletins have provided a critical early warning about emerging drug trends in communities across Canada.

Following a surge of xylazine detections in drug checking programs and increased mentions online last fiscal year, we released an updated **CCENDU Bulletin about xylazine**, which was downloaded more than 1,200 times.



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“During our years of collaboration with CCSA, we have watched CCSA rapidly become the national go-to source for information on substance use and health. We look forward to strengthening this partnership and continuing to generate and translate new knowledge to improve the mental and physical health of Canadians.”

— *Sidney Kennedy MD, FRCPC, FRCPsych,*
Executive Director, Homewood Research Institute

Summary Annual Financial Statements

Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements

To the Directors of the Canadian Centre on Substance
Use and Addiction

Opinion

The summary financial statements, which comprise the summary statement of financial position as at March 31, 2024, the summary statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial statements of the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction for the year ended March 31, 2024.

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements, in accordance with the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon. The summary financial statements and the audited financial statements do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on the audited financial statements.

The Audited Financial Statement and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial statements in our report dated June 28, 2024.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Summary Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements in accordance with the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are a fair summary of the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Audited Standard (CAS) 810, *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants,
Licensed Public Accountants

Ottawa, Canada
June 28, 2024

Summary Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Assets		
Cash	1,853,385	2,638,201
Trade and other receivables	900,001	454,415
Prepaid expenses	92,857	102,503
Investments	2,940,277	2,667,443
Capital assets	214,632	177,043
	6,001,152	6,039,605
Liabilities		
Trade payables and other payables	1,783,897	1,938,063
Deferred revenues from contributions, external contracts and conference	606,656	1,282,827
	2,390,553	3,220,890
Net assets		
Invested in capital assets	214,632	177,043
Internally restricted for contingencies	1,583,242	1,372,538
Internally restricted for future projects	1,612,720	1,144,128
Unrestricted	200,005	125,006
	3,610,599	2,818,715
	6,001,152	6,039,605

Summary Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

Year ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Revenues		
Health Canada primary funding contributions	11,456,555	10,966,245
Other contributions	–	2,671,487
External contracts	724,744	207,856
Conference	1,049,816	–
Net investment income	285,171	(28,906)
Other income	33,530	2,911
	13,549,816	13,819,593
Expenses		
Salaries and employee benefits	7,990,182	7,407,120
Contractor fees	1,879,160	4,026,477
Equipment maintenance and repairs	20,534	22,554
Honorariums	18,688	21,183
Rent	380,116	301,000
Equipment rental	126,235	18,223
Insurance	27,753	25,256
Travel, meetings and accommodations	1,214,458	785,431
Research expense	22,072	34,892
Printing	17,557	19,975
Advertising	162,869	301,224
Office supplies and expenses	320,224	397,153
Telecommunications	248,467	203,592
Membership fees	29,288	21,196
Professional fees	160,587	49,209
Recruitment	38,604	100,114
Amortization of tangible capital assets	101,138	84,926
Amortization of intangible capital assets	–	587
	12,757,932	13,820,112
Excess of revenues over expenses	791,884	(519)
Net assets, beginning balance	2,818,715	2,819,234
Net assets, end of year	3,610,599	2,818,715

Summary Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Cash flows provided by (used in)		
Operating activities	(590,133)	(836,826)
Investing activities	(194,683)	(188,104)
Net increase in cash	(784,816)	(1,024,930)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	2,638,201	3,663,131
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	1,853,385	2,638,201

Salary Disclosure

As of March 31, 2024, CCSA had 76 full-time employees. See the auditor's report for their salary and benefits. The directors on CCSA's board are volunteers and do not receive any remuneration.

Salary ranges	Minimum \$	Maximum \$
Level 1 (Governor in Council, Level 6)	Available on Privy Council website	
Level 2 executive	109,360	165,308
Management	93,440	150,370
Professionals	67,680	128,480
Specialists and technicians	50,320	79,200
Administrative support	44,320	60,940

Our Leadership

As of March 31, 2024

Leadership Team

- **Alexander Caudarella, MDCM CCFP AM ABAM(d)**
Chief Executive Officer
- **Kim Corace, PhD, C.Psych.**
Vice President of Innovation and Senior Scientist
- **Cathy Frame**
Director, Finance
- **François Gagnon, PhD**
Senior Scientist and Special Policy Advisor
- **David Haswell**
Director, Information Systems and Web Services
- **Pam Kent, PhD**
Director, Research and Emerging Trends
- **Susan Landry, CHRL**
Director, Human Resources
- **Rhowena Martin**
Chief Operating Officer
- **Shawna Meister, MA**
Associate Director, Innovation and Evidence in Practice
- **Heather Ochalski, MA**
Director, Indigenous Partnerships and Strategies
- **C'Fine Ezeanochie Okorochukwu, MBBS, MPH**
Director, Health Promotion and Prevention
- **Isabelle Robillard**
Director, Public Affairs and Community Engagement
- **Adam Sherk, PhD**
Senior Scientist and Special Policy Advisor
- **Sheena Taha, PhD**
Associate Director, Quality and Accountability
- **John Weekes, PhD**
Director, Knowledge Mobilization and Strategic Partnerships

Board of Directors

CCSA is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of a chair and 12 directors whose backgrounds and experience assist CCSA in the fulfillment of its purpose. The chair and up to four other directors are appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Health. Other directors, known as members-at-large, are recruited from a number of sectors, including the business community, labour groups and professional and voluntary organizations. These organizations also have a particular interest in alcohol and drug use that the Board considers appropriate. CCSA attempts to achieve national representation through its Board of Directors.

Board of Directors

Governor in Council Appointees

- › **Vaughan Dowie** (Ontario),
Chair; Member of the Executive Committee and the Performance Management Committee
CEO, Pine River Institute
- › **Curtis Clarke, PhD** (British Columbia), Treasurer; Member of the Executive Committee and the Performance Management Committee; Chair, Finance and Human Resource Committee
Retired Deputy Minister
- › **Christopher Cull** (Ontario), Member of the Nominations and Governance Committee
Director, Producer, Founder of Inspire by Example
- › **Scott Elliott** (British Columbia), CEO, *Dr. Peter Centre*
- › **Anne Elizabeth Lapointe, BA** (Quebec), Member of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the Finance and Human Resource Committee
Director, Addiction Prevention Centre and la Maison Jean Lapointe

Members-at-Large

- › **Lesley Carberry, MSW** (Yukon), Member of the Executive Committee; Chair, Audit and Risk Management Committee
Secretary-Treasurer, Teegatha'Oh Zheh Society; Parent Member, FASD 10-Year Strategic Planning Group
- › **Linda Dabros, BA (Psychology)** (Ontario), Vice Chair; Member of the Executive Committee and the Performance Management Committee; Chair, Nominations and Governance Committee
Former Director General, Canadian Human Rights Commission

- › **Deborah Dumoulin, BCom** (Quebec), Member of the Finance and Human Resource Committee
Chief Financial Officer, mdf commerce
- › **Daniel Hogan, BPHE** (Ontario), Member of the Audit and Risk Management Committee
Substance Abuse Violence Prevention Coordinator, Safe Schools Department of Durham District School Board
- › **Julie Menten, MSc, JD** (British Columbia), Board Secretary; Member of the Executive Committee and the Nominations and Governance Committee
Partner, Roper Greyell LLP
- › **Donald Nicholls, BCL, JD** (Quebec and Cree Nation), Member of the Finance and Human Resource Committee
Director of Justice and Correctional Services, Cree Nation Government
- › **Sandy Pitzel, BPA-HS, CSW** (Saskatchewan), Member of the Audit and Risk Management Committee
Mental Health Therapist, First Nations and Inuit Health, Health Canada, Indigenous Services
- › **John Weber, PhD** (Newfoundland and Labrador), Member of the Nominations and Governance Committee
Professor, School of Pharmacy, Memorial University

Ex-Officio Members

- › **Alexander Caudarella, MDCM CCFP AM ABAM(d)**
- › **Stephen Lucas**
Deputy Minister, Health Canada
- › **Shawn Tupper**
Deputy Minister, Public Safety Canada

Alumni Members

- › **Beverley Clarke, Chair** (Newfoundland and Labrador)
- › **Gary Bass** (British Columbia)
- › **Normand (Rusty) Beauchesne** (Ontario)
- › **Leonard Blumenthal** (Alberta)
- › **Jean-François Boivin** (Quebec)
- › **Mike DeGagné** (Ontario)
- › **Nady el-Guebaly** (Alberta)
- › **Jean Fournier** (Ontario)
- › **Pamela Fralick** (Ontario)
- › **Frances Jackson Dover** (Alberta)
- › **Renu Kapoor** (Saskatchewan)
- › **Barry V. King** (Ontario)
- › **Anne M. Lavack** (British Columbia)
- › **Jacques LeCavalier** (Quebec)
- › **Leanne Lewis** (Ontario)
- › **A. J. (Bert) Liston** (Ontario)
- › **Christine Loock** (British Columbia)
- › **Barry MacKillop** (Ontario)
- › **Mark Maloney** (Ontario)
- › **Marnie Marley** (British Columbia)
- › **Audrey McFarlane** (Alberta)
- › **Louise Nadeau** (Quebec)
- › **Rita Notarandrea** (Ontario)
- › **Michel Perron** (Ontario)
- › **Darryl Plecas** (British Columbia)
- › **Meredith Porter** (Ontario)
- › **Michael Prospero** (Ontario)
- › **Rémi Quirion** (Quebec)
- › **Pierre Sangollo** (Quebec)
- › **Jan Skirrow** (British Columbia)
- › **Sherry H. Stewart** (Nova Scotia)
- › **Margaret Thom** (Northwest Territories)
- › **Paula Tyler** (Alberta)



Canadian Centre
on **Substance Use**
and **Addiction**

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