

## **All Party Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use, and Addictions Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** May 22, 2024

**Time:** 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**Attendees:**

Committee Members: Tom Osborne, Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Paul Pike, Fred Hutton, Joedy Wall, Jim McKenna, and Lela Evans

Officials: John McGrath, Niki Legge, Maggie O'Toole

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1. Minutes approved from May 14, 2024.
2. Committee discussed how best to engage those with lived experience, including the EngageNL questionnaire, which is soon to be launched.
3. Presentation – Gerard Yetman with the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador provided an overview of the organization and the Safe Work Access Program (SWAP) program. The program reaches about 5,000-7,000 people. The mail out system has been successful and reaches approximately 100 rural communities. There has been an increase in clients between ages of 16-30. This age group has minimal access to drug or sex education. Discussion and questions included whether there should be safe injection sites in the province, stigma associated with drug use; potential or a need for a harm reduction centre in downtown St. John's; the population served by the organization; and need for supportive living options (sober living) after attending rehabilitation.

Biggest improvements identified since implementation of Towards Recovery included: continuation of SWAP across the province, including in Labrador; establishment of Hubs across the provinces; treatment centres across the province; and establishment of a centre of excellence.

Biggest improvements needed going forward included: need for education in 7-12 school system for drug, sex education and mental health, e.g., the "Take Care Down There" education program; additional rehabilitation beds in province and the need for longer than 26 days in rehabilitation; review of Atlantic Canada research on why people are leaving rehabilitation; need for transitional living options once discharged from rehabilitation; need for culturally appropriate rehabilitation services; and need for evaluation of the services.

4. Action Items
  - Deferred Alberta Access 24/7 presentation to next meeting.