

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **HKLN Drug Strategy Recognizes International Harm Reduction Day**

*Solidarity, support and breaking the stigma associated with substance use.*

**(May 7, 2024)** – The [Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes Northumberland \(HKLN\) Drug Strategy](#) would like to recognize May 7th as International Harm Reduction Day promoting evidence-based policies, practices and programs to reduce the social, legal and health-related harms associated with substance use.

The HKLN Drug Strategy would like to acknowledge the incredible dedication and compassion of harm reduction workers, community organizations and members who are driving positive change and providing compassionate care and support in solidarity and collaboration with people with living experience of substance use.

“Today, as we recognize International Harm Reduction Day we acknowledge and celebrate every day heroes working on the frontlines to save lives and continue to speak for the rights and dignities of people who use drugs,” said Dane Record, Chair of the HKLN Drug Strategy. “I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to read our framework and learn about our current harm reduction efforts. Knowledge is power and reducing the stigma associated with substance use is one of the goals the HKLN Drug Strategy strives for.”

Harm reduction refers to policies, programs and practices that aim to minimise the negative health, social and legal impacts associated with drug use, drug policies and drug laws. Harm reduction is grounded in justice and human rights. It focuses on positive change and on working with people without judgement, coercion, discrimination, or requiring that they stop using drugs as a precondition of support.

The HKLN Drug Strategy is a partnership of over 35 organizations, departments, and individuals across the three counties working directly or indirectly in social services, healthcare, or in harm reduction.

The following related event is taking place this week:

- **Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> from 11-12 p.m.:** Free Virtual Presentation by Dr. Sandra McNeil on *Recovery, Identity, Resistance: Substance Use Recovery and Stigma in Rural Areas*. This free 1-hour virtual event strives to:
  - Disrupt our assumptions about substance use.
  - Complicate current understandings of recovery.
  - Promote social inclusion to eliminate stigma and discrimination.

## OUR VISION

The HKLN Drug Strategy strives for supportive and safe environments that promote the health and resiliency of individuals, families and communities, and reduce the harms and stigma associated with substance use.



**HKLN**  
DRUG STRATEGY

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact Amanda Duncombe-Lee at [amandadl@pointintime.ca](mailto:amandadl@pointintime.ca) with your name, contact details and occupation to register.

#### **For More Information**

- Visit the [HKLN Drug Strategy](#) to learn more about current harm reduction efforts and
- Read the HKLN Drug Strategy's framework guide [Drug Strategy Network of Ontario's Solutions to End the Drug Poisoning Crisis in Ontario: Choosing a New Direction](#)
- View the [Opioid Overdose Report](#) produced by the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit.
- Visit the [Harm Reduction International](#) website

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