

DRUG STRATEGY

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MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, September 25, 2018

A WAY FORWARD

- Area Residents Urged to Learn More About Drug Strategy and Its Efforts to Address Substance Use -

(NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY) – With a new roadmap providing direction, local residents can join the journey to help tackle and reduce harm associated with drug and alcohol use in the area.

The newly-renamed Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland (HKLN) Drug Strategy has released results of a community survey involving 600+ residents and service providers in Northumberland County, Haliburton County and the City of Kawartha Lakes. The roadmap – entitled *HKLN Community Priorities Report 2018* – captures public concerns in the three counties about substance use-related harm and lists priorities on how to better address these concerns.

In the report, respondents identify these key local priorities: promoting community safety, improving strategies to deal with impaired driving, providing support to children and youth, and creating more services and supports for those dealing with substance-use addictions.

People can access the full *HKLN Community Priorities Report 2018* online at the Drug Strategy website (www.hklndrugstrategy.ca) or by emailing coordinator@hklndrugstrategy.ca. Local residents can also learn more in person at these upcoming community presentations:

- In Colborne on Wednesday, October 10, from 3-4:30 pm at the Keeler Centre (80 Division St.).
- In Port Hope on Monday, October 15, at the HKPR District Health Unit office (200 Rose Glen Rd.). Two sessions will be offered: one in the afternoon from 3-4:30 pm, and the other in the early evening running from 5:30-7 pm.

The Drug Strategy is also holding similar events in Lindsay on October 4 and Minden on October 9.

“To our knowledge, this is the first time such a broad survey has been completed in Northumberland, Haliburton and Kawartha Lakes to better understand people’s attitudes and perceptions about substance use in their area,” says Megan Deyman, the Coordinator of the HKLN Drug Strategy. “The roadmap is very timely because it provides a starting point for conversation on how the community might collectively respond to the harms associated with substance use, especially at a time when many of our communities are dealing with an unprecedented number of opioid-related overdoses and preparing for cannabis legalization happening in October 2018.”

“The local HKLN Drug Strategy, originally known as HKPR, was renamed earlier this month to more clearly reflect the area it serves,” Deyman adds. Such drug strategies are common across Ontario and are tailored to each community’s needs based on public input. To reduce harm associated with alcohol, drugs and the use of prescription medication not as prescribed, the drug strategy focuses on four main areas: harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment, and justice and enforcement.

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“The strength of a regional drug strategy like ours is that it includes all aspects of substance use, and brings together many different groups, wearing many different hats, all seeking solutions,” says Catherine MacDonald, Substances and Harm Reduction Coordinator at the HKPR District Health Unit. “We also encourage local residents to get involved in the drug strategy, either by reading the report online or coming out to one of the community presentations.”

Locally, nearly 50 organizations are involved in the local drug strategy, including police services, fire departments, EMS personnel, Health Unit staff, community-based agencies, treatment services, pharmacists, Family Health Teams, youth and social service agencies, mental health groups, and concerned individuals.

“Fourcast is pleased to be part of the HKPR Drug Strategy and we have been impressed by the community interest and input in the development of this strategy. The recommendations and insights provide an exceptional starting point to move forward in our communities to reducing the harms of substance use,” says Donna Rogers, Executive Director at Four Counties Addiction Services Team (Fourcast).

“Drugs and related issues are always a priority for the Kawartha Lakes Police Service. Being a member of the Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland Drug Strategy provides a unique opportunity for the police to work with our community partners and provides other avenues to assist our community members who misuse both legal and illegal substances. The members of the Drug Strategy use their combined expertise to provide the best services possible to our community members who are in need,” says Kirk Robertson, Detective Sergeant with Kawartha Lakes Police Service.

The local drug strategy is being funded through the Grow Grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, with the specific purpose of engaging small communities and diverse groups to improve community life. An agency of the Government of Ontario, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is one of Canada’s largest granting foundations. With a budget of over \$136 million, OTF awards grants to some 1,000 projects every year to build healthy and vibrant Ontario communities.

For media inquiries, contact:

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