

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction and the United States Embassy in Ottawa host one-day expert forum on addressing the opioid crisis in North America

Ottawa, March 20, 2018 — The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) and the United States Embassy in Ottawa will host a one-day expert forum on addressing the opioid crisis in North America on Tuesday, March 20.

Four American experts in fields of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and enforcement will join their Canadian counterparts as speakers during the forum, called **Pillars of Change: Priorities for Addressing the Opioid Crisis**. The experts from both countries will share information about ongoing efforts to respond to the opioid crisis in North America and participate in panel discussions built around Canada's drug and substances strategy.

The forum will provide an opportunity to learn more about what has and has not worked in our approaches and to explore opportunities to foster collaborative relationships between Canada and the United States.

"In 2016 there were 2,816 reported opioid-related deaths in Canada, and public health experts estimate the total lives lost in 2017 will exceed 4,000 when final data is available," says Rita Notarandrea, Chief Executive Officer of CCSA. "Behind these numbers are Canadians and their families who are struggling against the devastating impacts of this crisis. Addiction affects us all, and by working together, we can help prevent tragedies, turn the corner on this crisis today and be prepared for tomorrow."

Sprawling, ever-changing and deadly, the current opioid epidemic is a multifaceted problem that requires an equally multifaceted solution or solutions, plural. No one organization or level of government is likely to resolve this crisis single-handedly because no single approach is sufficient.

This forum will feature an overview of ongoing initiatives in North America. Attendees will take part in informative presentations and panels, moderated by members of CCSA's First Do No Harm executive council. Audience participation is encouraged and by the end of the forum all participants will have identified and validated actions to address the many harms this crisis is causing to individuals, families and communities, and build on the work currently underway across the country.

"According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 64,000 Americans died from a drug overdose in 2016 alone," said Kay Mayfield, Minister Counselor for Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy. "The United States Embassy in Ottawa welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction on this wide-ranging program to bring together Americans and Canadians involved in combatting the opioid crisis."

This expert forum is the second project in a three-part program organized by the CCSA and supported by the United States Embassy in Ottawa. The program will also include a cross-Canada, six-city speaker series in which experts will share valuable first-hand experiences with Canadians at the community level. The first project consisted of a best practice workshop with experts in Calgary in November 2017.

Problematic substance use impacts individuals, families and communities and there are thousands of people working throughout North America to do the best they can for those in need. Scheduled over the coming months, these events will provide an opportunity for collaboration, learning and knowledge sharing. The subject-matter experts are available for media interviews, upon request.



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Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.

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