In 2019, more than 200 community members came together to share ideas and make a plan to reduce the impacts of the opioid and substance use crisis at the Ottawa Summit on Opioids, Substance Use and Mental Health. Together, we created the Ottawa Community Action Plan and since then, diverse community and national partners have continued to lead on the actions outlined in the plan. We’ve made great progress in some areas, and others require our renewed energy and commitment to move forward in a world that is drastically different than it was just a year ago.

To support the goals and actions in the Ottawa Community Action Plan (OCAP), Ottawa Public Health (OPH), The Royal, the Community Addictions Peer Support Association (CAPSA), the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA), and the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) have compiled this summary of the milestones achieved on the Ottawa Community Action Plan.

Goal 1: Preventing Stigma and Problematic Substance Use

Highlights of Accomplishments

Stigma education and training sessions were provided to health care sector workers resulting in increased awareness, knowledge, and skills of stigma related to problematic substance use, substance use disorders, and person first language.

Using the City of Ottawa as a pilot site, and the activities outlined in the OCAP, partners are addressing stigma locally and then scaling local initiatives to a national level.

CCSA and CPHA adapted the Organizational Assessment Tool into the implementation of an ethics approved organizational survey. This survey was designed to assess the employee and volunteer perspective of stigma in Ottawa based health care agencies and public and private non-healthcare workplaces related to substance use and substance use disorders.

A Nanos poll conducted for CCSA in April 2020 revealed that 25% of Canadians (aged 35-54) are drinking more while at home due to COVID-19 pandemic; cite lack of regular schedule, stress and boredom as main factors.
Breaking free resource widely promoted through core agencies

OPH launched the Mental Health and COVID-19 website with local COVID-19 mental health data and links to resources developed by core agencies.

CCSA launched impacts of COVID-19 on Substance Use webpage, and has been hosting Implications of COVID-19 Webinar Series.

As follow up to a successful RDO, CAPSA disseminated a language communications package (Stigma Primer and Self-Reflection toolkit co-developed in partnership with CCSA) to accompany much needed PPE and disseminated to numerous local agencies!

Launch of The Sting of Stigma: Recognizing Stigma and its Impacts resource: CCSA launched the first learning module in a series on the topic of stigma and substance use. Weaving together the latest evidence, thought-provoking exercises, and videos from experts in the field, including those with lived and living experience, this module will help Canadians recognize the various forms of stigma and its devastating impacts and use language that demonstrates understanding and compassion for people who use substances.

CAPSA hosted the first virtual Recovery Day Ottawa with extremely positive feedback and added over 260 new subscribers to CAPSA’s newsletter!

With the impact of the global pandemic, additional efforts have been made to develop and promote existing resources, such as:

- **Breaking free resource** widely promoted through core agencies
- OPH launched the Mental Health and COVID-19 website with local COVID-19 mental health data and links to resources developed by core agencies.
- CCSA launched impacts of COVID-19 on Substance Use webpage, and has been hosting Implications of COVID-19 Webinar Series.
- As follow up to a successful RDO, CAPSA disseminated a language communications package (Stigma Primer and Self-Reflection toolkit co-developed in partnership with CCSA) to accompany much needed PPE and disseminated to numerous local agencies!

OPH’s Mental Health of Ottawa’s Black Community Research Study launched, highlighting emerging evidence and recommendations to improve services and supports for the African, Caribbean and Black community.

CCSA, in collaboration with Carleton University, University of Ottawa and Algonquin College released the Stigma, Substances and Mental Health 101: An Educator’s Guide to Supporting Students for faculty and staff at Ottawa’s three largest post-secondary institutions!

Overcoming Stigma Through Language is a bilingual resource that has been developed by CCSA in partnership with CAPSA

Recovery Day Ottawa and CAPSA further built on the Stigma Ends With Me library.
Goal 2 - Emerging Harm Reduction Initiatives That Can Reduce Harms Associated With Opioid Use

Highlights of Accomplishments

**OPY continues to support community naloxone distribution as the core Ontario Naloxone Program in Ottawa. This has included working with partners to ensure access to take-home naloxone kits and training remains available across the city and working with pharmacy partners like Respect Rx Pharmacare to increase accessibility through virtual training platforms.**

**Harm reduction services have been incorporated in program delivery of new COVID-19 specific services, including self-isolation and distancing centers and respite services.**

**Supervised Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS/SCS) agencies are continuing to collaborate to ensure services are maintained and are actively working to increase capacity across sites as safe to do so.**

**Harm Reduction guidance documents for COVID-19 and safer sex work, and safer drug use developed and are available online.**

**TELUS Ottawa Inner City Mobile Health Clinic repurposed as a mobile COVID-19 clinic. The van is being used to provide assessment and testing for people living in shelters/congregative living or who are homeless.**

**COVID-19 Self-Isolation centre offering a 40-bed isolation and treatment centre for people who are homeless or in shelters, with onsite harm reduction and SCSs.**

**In the spring of 2020, Health Canada approved Safer Supply Ottawa program funding for a one year pilot. Partners (Pathways to Recovery, Recovery Care, Ottawa Inner City Health, Respect RX Pharmacy, Somerset West Community Health Centre (CHC), Sandy Hill CHC and OPH) are hopeful that this program will decrease the risk of overdose and better the conditions for individuals who are dependent on the illegal, toxic drug supply. Alternative approaches recognize the varied needs of individuals who use substances across our community.**

**Safer Supply Ottawa partners continue to collaborate to advance their work during the City’s COVID-19 pandemic response.**
Goal 3: Collaborating and Integrating Across the System to Centralize Access to Comprehensive Mental Health, Substance Use and Social Services Leading to Increased Access and Uptake of Services

Highlights of Accomplishments

Between July 2019 and March 2020, through collaboration and partnering across the system, the Regional Coordinated Access initiative (RCA) brought together 78 health service providers and social services agencies, and more than 30 client, family, and peer organization representatives to design an implementation plan for coordinated access to mental health and substance use/addictions services across the Champlain region. The work was funded by the Champlain LHIN and involved refining the RCA conceptual model (which was similarly co-designed in 2018/19). The implementation plan is now complete and partners are focused on the next steps in this exciting system transformation towards easy, efficient, and equitable access to mental health and addictions/substance use services across Champlain Region.

RCA will launch a limited version of regional coordinated access to help respond to elevated needs in the COVID-19 pandemic. This will leverage existing coordinated access resources within six partner organizations:

- Cornwall Community Hospital
- Hawkesbury General Hospital
- Montfort Renaissance
- Pembroke Regional Hospital
- The Royal
- Youth Services Bureau

The Royal, in collaboration with community partners, launched COVID Frontline Wellness. This new initiative connects health care workers with support and tools to help them deal with COVID-related stress and its impact on their mental well-being. Frontline Wellness allows for the implementation and evaluation of some of RCA components, such as technology for eReferrals and self-scheduling, as well as trialing standardized intake processes and service matching to a suite of services and partners within a stepped-care approach.

In October, CHEO announced funding for One Call/One Click, a new initiative that will help Kids Come First create a single point of entry to Eastern Ontario’s system of care for mental health and addictions.