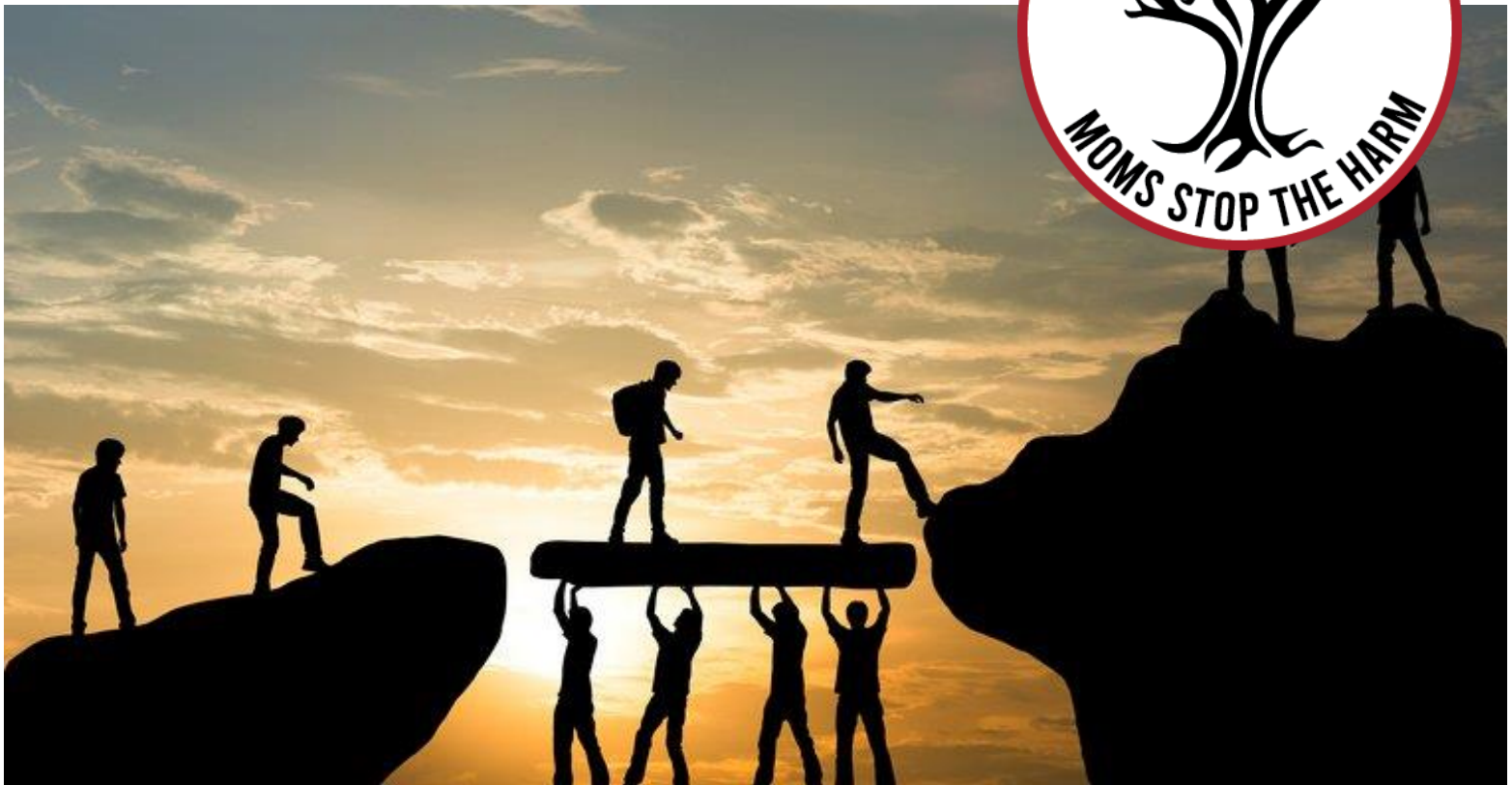


# Annual Report

Jan 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023



**Working Together,  
Making a Difference**

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Somebody has to stand when other people are sitting. Somebody has to speak when everyone else is quiet.

Bryan Stevenson

## Who We Are



Moms Stop The Harm (MSTH) is a network of Canadian families impacted by substance use related harms and deaths. We advocate to change failed drug policies and provide peer support to grieving families and those with loved one who use or have used substances. The organization is governed by a National Board of Directors representing membership from regions across Canada.

MSTH membership is a network of families and allies of all ages and from all walks of life who are making a real and valuable difference in the fight to end substance use related harms and deaths in Canada. We welcome new members to our network! Consider getting involved as a member and support our advocacy efforts for those who struggle with substance use.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022 – 2023**

*Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.*

*Benjamin Franklin*

**Board Chair** – Petra Schulz

**Vice Chair** – Marie Agioritis

**Treasurer** – Annie Storey

**Secretary** – Charlene Vacon

#### **Directors at Large:**

- **BC** Regional Director, Jeremy Kalicum (2022)
- **BC** Regional Director, Traci Letts (2022)
- **AB** Regional Director, Dorene Loughlin (2022)
- **SK** Regional Director, Willi McCorriston (2021)
- **MB** Regional Director, Arlene Last-Kolb (2021)
- **MB** Regional Director, Tamara Taillieu (2022)
- **ON** Regional Director, Missy McLean (2021)
- **Atlantic** Regional Director, Emily Bodechon (2021)

**Acting Director of Operations** – Tyla Savard

## MSTH MISSION & VALUES

### **Our Mission**

The values represent the core beliefs of Moms Stop The Harm. The values serve to inspire and guide us in the work that we do. They represent what Moms Stop The Harm stands for, and they inform futures generations of leadership.

1. We commit to fostering a caring community for all. We seek to ensure that all people are treated justly and with compassion. We demonstrate dignity, caring and equality for all.
2. We share our passion and commitment to energize, engage, and inspire members and advocates to share their stories and have their voices heard.
3. We value integrity because it keeps us safe with one another, and within the world. Integrity includes the qualities of honesty, courage, and mutual respect.
4. We value our connections with one another. We aim to give a sense of belonging to all those we support.
5. We believe in inclusion for all, and advocate for the creation so a diverse, and accepting community that is free of prejudice, one that receives others with empathy and understanding.
6. We aim to continually learn and educate. In all that we do, we lead the way to a narrative for change, guided by lived experience and evidence-based knowledge.
7. With courage and respect, we uphold the human rights of persons marginalized and discriminated against because of substance use.
8. We value our partnerships and teamwork with other individuals and organizations recognizing the united family voice for change as an integral part of a greater movement.



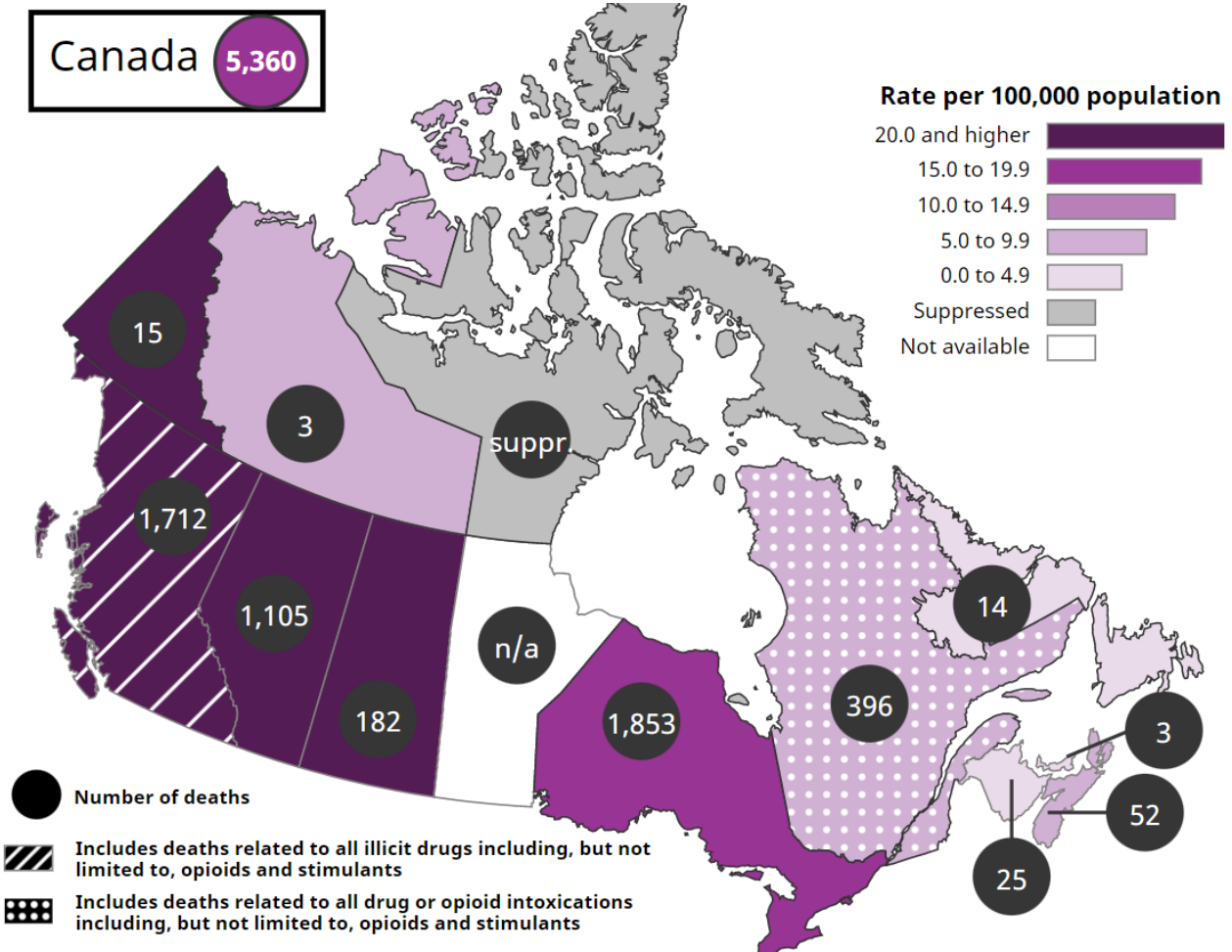
### **Our Values**

9. We commit to fostering a caring community for all. We seek to ensure that all people are treated justly and with compassion. We demonstrate dignity, caring and equality for all.
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16. We value our partnerships and teamwork with other individuals and organizations, recognizing the united family voice for change as an integral part of a greater movement.



Number and rates (per 100,000 population) of    
 apparent opioid toxicity deaths



**Manitoba data from January to September 2022 were not available at the time of this update.**

Suppressed (suppr.) – Data may be suppressed in provinces or territories with low numbers of cases.

Not available (n/a) – Data were not available at the time of this publication.

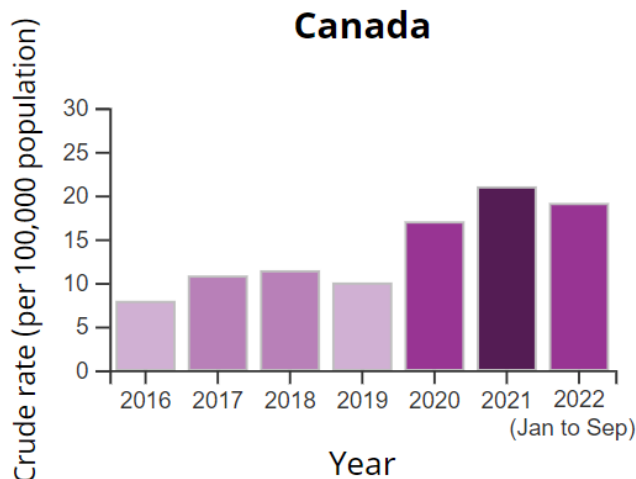
Manitoba data from January to September 2022 were not available at the time of this update.

**i** This report is based on data submitted to the Public Health Agency of Canada on or before February 1, 2023. Due to differences in identifying and reporting cases, comparisons over time and between provinces and territories should be interpreted with caution. Both age-adjusted and crude rates are available.

## What: There was a total of 34,455 apparent opioid toxicity deaths between January 2016 and September 2022

- A total of 5,360 apparent opioid toxicity deaths occurred so far in 2022 (January - September). This is approximately 20 deaths per day. For the same period in 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of deaths per day was 10, which increased to a peak of 21 in 2021.
- The number of total apparent opioid toxicity deaths in Canada reported so far in 2022 (January - September) has been lower (8%) than the same period in the previous year. This is based on preliminary data subject to change as death investigations are completed and reported. However, based on current national data, analyses show there has been no significant decrease in trend and rates remain high.

## Where: A majority of deaths occurred in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario; high rates were also observed within other regions



- So far in 2022 (January – September), most (87%) of all accidental apparent opioid toxicity deaths in Canada occurred in British Columbia, Alberta, or Ontario.
- Elevated mortality rates have also been observed in other areas with smaller population sizes, including Saskatchewan and Yukon.

## Who: Most apparent opioid toxicity deaths among young- to middle-aged males

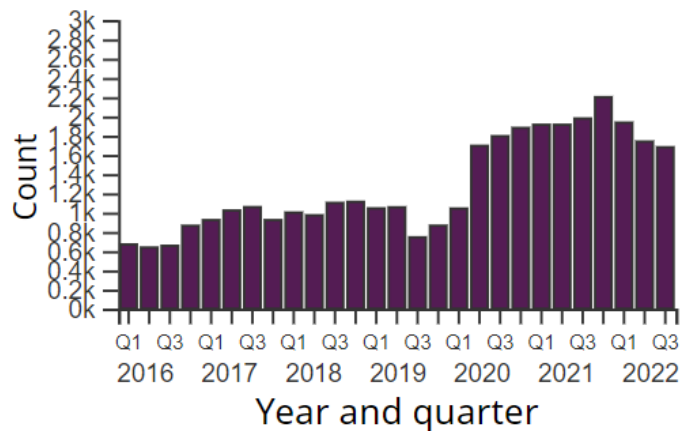
- Males accounted for the majority of accidental apparent opioid toxicity deaths (75%) so far in 2022 (January – September).
- For males and for females, the majority of accidental apparent opioid toxicity deaths were among individuals aged 20 to 59 years.

## Why: Toxicity of supply continues to be a major driver of the crisis

- Of all accidental apparent opioid toxicity deaths so far in 2022 (January – September), 81% involved fentanyl.
- Of all accidental apparent opioid toxicity deaths so far in 2022 (January – September), 78% involved opioids that were only non-pharmaceutical

## Data on the polysubstance nature of the overdose crisis

- Available information from seven provinces and territories indicates the number of apparent stimulant toxicity deaths so far in 2022 (January – September) was high. Almost all (98%) of those deaths were accidental.
- Over half (53%) of accidental apparent opioid toxicity deaths so far in 2022 (January – September) also involved a stimulant, reflecting the polysubstance nature of this crisis.
- Of the accidental apparent stimulant toxicity deaths so far in 2022 (January – September), 63% involved cocaine, while 52% involved methamphetamines.
- Of the accidental apparent stimulant toxicity deaths so far in 2022 (January – September), 78% involved an opioid.



Data on apparent opioid and stimulant toxicity deaths are not mutually exclusive. A high proportion of deaths involving a stimulant also involved an opioid. Adding up those numbers would result in an overestimation of the burden of opioids and stimulants.

## Message from Board Chair

### **A WORD FROM OUR RETIRING BOARD CHAIR - A Time of Transition**

By Petra Schulz

Moms Stop the Harm was born from an idea shared over dinner following the 2015 Edmonton Harm Reduction Conference. It was the first time I shared Danny's story with a live audience, moderated by the amazing [Dr. Carl Hart](#). Co-founder [Lorna Thomas](#) was in the audience at the time and [Leslie McBain](#) and I had connected via a news article. The idea came from the now-retired Canadian Drug Policy Coalition Executive Director [Donald McPherson](#) who thought that families, especially moms could help strengthen the drug policy voice.

That little seed planted over dinner grew. After Lorna, Leslie and I met, we understood that we not only shared the pain of having lost our sons but also a determination to change deadly drug policy. From that idea, we took action in 2016 by registering a domain and starting a Facebook page. Our little group grew fast in the fall of 2016. 14 moms, a dad and a sibling met in Summerland BC to formally define our organization and our aims. In 2017 we became a registered society and in 2023 we applied for charitable status. From the time the three of us took



action to today, our organization has grown to over 3500 families across Turtle Island. Sadly, due to the magnitude of the crisis we have grown in numbers, strengths and influence.

From the beginning understanding and supporting one another was essential to help us all be strong as advocates and activists. Our support to Canadian families has grown and thanks to funding from the [BC Government](#) and [Health Canada](#) we have developed our [Holding Hope](#) and [Healing Hearts](#) programs across the country. We could not have done this alone. We depend on all of you, our members, donors and funders, and allied organizations, especially those that represent people who use drugs. We can not and should not speak for drug users, but as families, we can help amplify their voices. Specific aims have evolved and together with our allies, we had some wins over the years, like making Naloxone available without a prescription, the 911 Good Samaritan Act, and partial decriminalization in BC. Our actions are focused on our vision to reduce harm and deaths. We are part of national coalitions and fight for the provision of [safe regulated alternatives](#) to toxic drugs, for the [decriminalization](#) of people who use drugs, for life-saving harm reduction, evidence-informed treatment and prevention.

We have come far and yet, there is so much to do. This is illustrated by the ever-climbing death toll and the voices of those who want to slash and burn hard-fought harm reduction services illustrate this. Organizationally we also need to further evolve by becoming more diverse in our membership and board by better including and representing equity-deserving people. We have a new strategic plan to work on, and policies to update and write.

This is a time of transition for us, as I am the last co-founder whose term on the board is ending. I am leaving the leadership of this organization that is so dear to all of us in the capable hands of [Marie Agioritis](#), one of our founding directors, and her amazing team. I look forward to spending less time on administration and more on advocacy like my fellow cofounders have done. I will not go far, I will continue to fight for the lives and the rights of people who use drugs, the people we love.

I offer a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who is part of this journey, to the many directors and advocates I have worked with over the years, to our hard-working and dedicated staff team and to our allies our fight will continue.



**MSTH Co-Founder and retiring Board Chair  
Petra Schulz with her dog Brandy**

## Messages from our Co-Founders

### **Leslie McBain, Co-Founder MSTH**

Writing for the Annual Report always gives me pause! We tend to work from one issue, one project, one meeting to the next without taking a breath. I am not good at journaling events so I will give an overview of the work. I have put most of my energy in the events, the challenges, the successes and the often-devastating failures in B.C. I worked on a committee to help create, in collaboration with the federal and provincial Ministries of Health and Addictions, a workable (though flawed) Decriminalization of people who possess 2.5 grams or less of illicit drugs. It became a pilot project on January 31st 2023. We are proud that at least one province has made this step.



I also worked with the Canadian Drug policy Coalition to help create a workable model for a safer supply of drugs for people who are dependent. The work is ongoing. I am on several more committees reviewing models for safe supply and for accountability of recovery facilities.

I speak on various media, speak on panels and to groups who request us. I love to educate the voting population on ‘the what and why’ of our advocacy. Changing hearts and minds are how we will succeed. And we will succeed in the saving the lives of people who use drugs. It is like turning the Titanic – slow and very important. We won’t give up!


"MSTH Co-Founder Leslie McBain is being honoured at a blanket ceremony on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, for the launch of the Indigenous Healing Heart grief handbook with First National Health Authority."

### **Lorna Thomas, Co-Founder MSTH**

As one of the Co-Founders of Moms Stop The Harm my harm reduction work continues to focus on men in the trades. The drug poisoning crisis is impacting people working in construction and other trades more than any other workforce. In 2022 I co-produced a video featuring 4 men sharing their stories of use and recovery. It is entitled “Building Hope: Substance Use in the

Trades” <https://youtu.be/0BFiCM1QImk> . It currently has more than 4700 views on You Tube. Also in 2022, I was invited to present at two round table conversations with the Federal Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Carolyn Bennet and Minister of Labour Seamus O’Regan about the impact of the drug poisoning crisis on those in the natural resources industries. I continue to meet regularly with the Alberta Construction Safety Association as they work on a webpage of harm reduction resources for their members. Recently I was interviewed for an article in a trade magazine for 1600 sheet metal workers and businesses. My husband wryly commented ‘you’re the centerfold.’ Check out the article on page 25: <https://smacna-ab.ca/2023-edition/?page=27>. As you will read there our son, Alex Thomas Haug, was a welder who died in 2012 by a drug related suicide. It is in his memory that I do the work that I do.

**TRADES AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE DYING AT A HIGHER RATE THAN WORKERS IN ANY OTHER INDUSTRY**



For more resources on substance use and overdose risks and prevention visit: <https://linktr.ee/meninthetrades>

Video co-produced by Lorna Thomas (co-founder of MSTH) and George Passmore and Matthew Huot (from SOURCES B.C.) “Building Hope: Substance Use in the Trades” is a film starring four men with experience in the construction industry and trades. as well as their own experiences with substance use, speak to their fellow tradespeople about how to stay safer in the overdose era. Men account for 80% of overdose deaths in Canada which has become a leading cause of death across the country. Men in the trades are at particular risk of experiencing substance use-related harms, including overdose. [For More Information](#)

## 2022/2023 At A Glance

### SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

1. Healing Hearts and Holding Hope
  - [Stronger Together team retreat](#) in Edmonton October 14 and 15, 2022



Our Stronger Together team members Antoinette Gravel-Ouellette, Tyla Savard, Isabelle Fortier and Chair Petra Schulz at our retreat.

We met in Edmonton, AB - Edmonton is located within Treaty 6 Territory and within the Métis homelands and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4. We acknowledge this land as the traditional territories of many First Nations. Retreat participants took part in harm reduction training, Indigenous learning, including a blanket exercise and getting to know one another from across the country!

## 2. Virtual Education - list summary of webinars

- [Johann Hari Webinar](#) “The War on Drugs: The True Causes and Consequences of a Moral Injustice”. January 2023
- [Vicky Reynolds Webinar](#) on “Using Your Advocacy Voice” November 2022
- [Virtual Grief Conference](#) October 2023

Families, grief supporters and professionals attended this important conference as we spoke to the immeasurable grief families are experiencing from the Toxic Drug Poisoning Crisis taking place across Canada.

Guest speakers included Dr. Alan Wolfelt, Andrea Warnick, Roy Ellis and others.



L-R Deb Bailey, Corenne Antrobus, Kat Wahamaa, Traci Letts, Leslie McBain, Jennifer Howard at the Moms Stop the Harm “Grief Conference - Healing After a Substance Use Related Passing” from October 26 - 28th, 2022.

## 3. Social Media Engagement - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

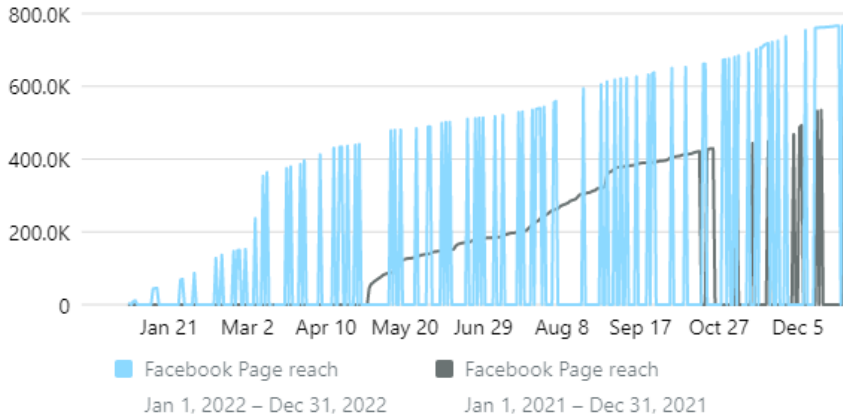
- Twitter 7300 followers in 2022
- Tweets had 589000 impressions (views)
- 733 new followers
- January to March 2023: 291,000 impressions (views)
- 286 new followers

Note: The Twitter account is a personal account administered by Petra Schulz on behalf of MSTH

Facebook Page reach ⓘ

769,026 ↑ 33.9%

Cumulative



[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)



[Instagram](#)

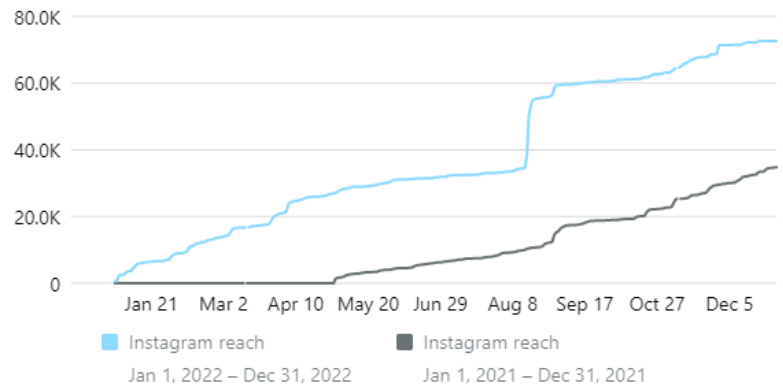
[MSTH Youtube Channel](#)



Instagram reach ⓘ

72,662 ↑ 109%

Cumulative



I raise up my voice not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard. We cannot succeed when half of us are held back.

Malala Yousafzai

## ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS:

Our advocacy efforts seek to bring about change so people can participate fully in society as equal citizens. When we fight for rights, they become ingrained in society.

- [Court Action against the Government of Alberta](#) over consumption site rules, February 2022
- Initiated the [Safe Supply Round Table](#) with the Federal Minister for Mental Health and addictions Carolyn Bennett, March 2022
- Contributed to [Decriminalization Done Right Platform](#) with 20 other organizations, April 2022
- [Rallies Across BC](#) for the 6th Anniversary of the Public Health Emergency, April 2023
- Decriminalize Already Round Table Discussion with Bill C-216 sponsor Gord Johns, Edmonton, April 2022
- [Poppies for Safe Supply](#) for Bereaved Mothers Day, May 2022
- [Zap Event](#) in support of Decriminalization Bill C-216, May 2022
- [Sending MPs to summer school](#) with a free copy of the book Overdose, June 2022
- Co-wrote [letter](#) to call accountability from the recovery industry in AB, June 2022
- Online conversation for [Support Don't Punish](#) June 2022
- Ontario members witnessing and protesting the [vote on the decriminalization Bill C-216](#) in the house of Commons, Ottawa June 2022
- [International Overdose Awareness Day](#) - success or a sign of the crisis? August 2022
- [Grieving mother Jessica Michalofsky](#) running a marathon a day around B.C. ministry building to raise awareness of drug crisis, Victoria, November 2022
- [Dying for Access Rally](#) in Edmonton, November 2022
- [Film Screening Love in the Time of Fentanyl](#) in Edmonton, February 2023
- [Abandoned by the Recovery Model Rally](#) in Calgary and Edmonton, February 2023
- Social Media Campaign for [Black Balloon Day](#) March 2022
- [Ongoing Petitions to the House of Commons](#) on the Drug Poisoning Crisis

## Strategic Goals



**Collaboration and  
Communication**

**Understanding  
Capacity and Rest**

**Structure that  
Empowers**

### **Leading like geese**

During the April 1st strategic planning session, one of the Moms Stop the Harm board members told us a story about the Canadian geese that fly over her house every spring and fall.

She reminded us that the geese’s familiar V formations, an aerodynamic shape that makes it possible for the whole flock to migrate long distances, have rotating leaders. When one leader gets tired and needs to rest, they fall back and another member of the flock is ready to move up and take their turn.

To coordinate their shifts in position, and to maintain the integrity of the flock’s V formation, geese honk to each other while they’re flying, despite the extra energy it takes. It’s believed they also do this to encourage and support each other on their long journey.

## Strategic priorities: Spring 2023 - Spring 2026

### Advocacy

**Objective:** We use our voices to advocate and influence policy-makers to work towards a revised and equitable, effective, evidence-based national drug strategy that is focused on decriminalization and access to legally regulated supply of substances.

**Key shift:** We will create a national Advocacy Team of board and non-board volunteers, who will meet regularly, build capacity, plan for advocacy, coordinate non-partisan activities, share best practices, and report progress to the board. We will seek funding for a paid advocacy coordinator.

### Peer Support

**Objective:** We support grieving families and people who struggle with substance use so that they understand their options and opportunities, which results in a sense of belonging, hope, resilience and connections.

**Key shift:** We will empower the Peer Support teams (Stronger Together BC and Canada) to work together to integrate participant feedback, and advise the board on resources needed to continually strengthen and innovate our programming at the local level. We strive to expand & deepen services across Canada.

### Community Outreach

**Objective:** We will build relationships with key stakeholders and provide resources aimed at reducing the stigma and discrimination experienced by people who use substances and their families.

**Key shift:** We will focus on building closer relationships with the people and organizations who can help us reach our advocacy and peer support goals. We will seek feedback from our network, and streamline the toolkits, services, actions, resources, trainings, and research that are most valuable to our community.

### Organizational Strength

**Objective:** We maintain our momentum and build sustainable organizational capacity by continuously investing in our team culture, members, staff, and board, as well as our policies, systems, and feedback loops.

**Key shift:** We will transition to a governing board, and move daily operations to staff, and volunteer committees. We will transition MSTH to a registered charity. We will plan for and seek the funding to pay for essential staff capacity. We will address our weaknesses as an organization, and build on our strengths and opportunities.

“You have been assigned this mountain to show others it can be moved”

Unknown

I want to be like a  
sunflower, so that even on  
the darkest days,  
I will stand tall and find  
the sunlight.





## Provincial Reports – updates from our Board of Directors & Members across Canada

### British Columbia

2022 has been a year of heartbreak in British Columbia as we experienced the highest rate of toxic drug fatalities in our history, while at the same time, it has been a year of hope and renewed determination, as we work together to tackle the deep-seated societal challenges that have been many years in the making.

Our membership here in BC, has sadly doubled, from 2021 - March 2023, which directly correlates to the increased toxicity of the drug supply. Without harm reduction efforts, the take-home Naloxone program, increased drug testing availability and many other resources available, we would be in even more dire circumstances.

Provincially 2022 has been a year of Connection and Education, as the BC MSTH Team was fortunate enough to receive funding from CAI-BC and the MMHA. This funding was focused on increasing membership Awareness and Engagement. Through the funding, The Stronger Together BC Program was able to provide a variety of educational opportunities, such as, The “Voices for Change” conference (June 3-5). The conference, open to both members and allies across Canada, provided an opportunity to connect, network and share resources, while being front seat to informative workshops and presentations, both in person and virtual.

Throughout the year as part of the membership engagement project, we were able to host a variety of presentations, that included:

- Travis Lupick,
- Maia Szalavitz,
- Donald McPherson (CDPC),
- Kevin Hollet (BCCSU) and
- Johann Hari

Stronger Together BC also organized a Grief Conference that was attended by over 180 people, with Dr. Alan Wolfelt providing the Keynote opening.

2022 saw an increase of grassroots actions, as advocates took to the streets in every area across the province providing a highly visible presence at local April 14th events (BC Declaration of a public health crisis 2016) and on August 31 IOAD (International Overdose Awareness Day). Membership embraced and participated in black balloon day, bereaved Mother’s Day, and support don’t punish. We painted our towns purple with ribbons and chairs.

With funding from the City of Vancouver CAT, Deb Bailey’s Sudden Silence exhibit premiered with rave reviews, and has since been touring throughout the province. In April of 2023 a



magazine supporting the project was produced and is now available. The exhibit is an educational photo-story project that focuses on the real people & families behind the photos.

Members across the province engaged in actions, organized and spoke at events, signed and forwarded petitions and connected and supported one another through it all. Many joined local Community Action Teams on MSTH's behalf.

BC was also the first province to pilot the decriminalization trial that allows for up to 2.5 grams of substances for personal use.

## **Alberta**

Alberta has had a very active 15 months. We have faced a challenging year where harm reduction is under attack, yet we have seen the worst death rates in the history of this province. Throughout the year our advocates and our allies fight address the mis-information, the attacks and make sure we get our story out and keep people safe. There are amazing individuals and organizations working on this, many of whom can not be named.

We do want to highlight our close partnerships with the drug user organization The MSTH Stronger Together Canada team met in Edmonton in October to do some program planning. We were fortunate they set aside some time to also do some learning, networking and connecting with our members and advocates in person or via ZOOM for those who couldn't make it to Edmonton. Fortunately, all three of our Co-Founders Leslie McBain, Petra Schulz and Lorna Thomas were all able to attend. Activities included:

- A Blanket Ceremony
- 4B Harm Reduction provided a presentation on their work as well as Naloxone Training.
- Lorna Thomas provided a screening of the production "Building Hope: Substance Use in the Trades". (Also referenced in the Co-founder Reports section)

On a VERY cold November day we held our STILL DYING FOR ACCESS rally to bring attention to harm reduction, safer supply and evidence-based treatment. Together with our allies, we met in Edmonton at the AB Legislature to coincide with the opening of the fall sitting of the Legislature. To address the ongoing crisis, we called on the government to:

**Be loud about the things that  
are important to you!**

Karen Walrond

- Expand supervised consumption services and reopen closed sites
- Provide access to safe regulated substances to replace toxic street drugs
- Offer rapid, barrier-free access to medical detox and evidence-based treatment.

We have to let the AB government know that we are not going to stand quietly aside any longer!

In December we had the honour and privilege of hearing from Ophelia Cara and her mother on the impacts of recent changes made by our government. Specifically, the current government has made some drastic changes to the way they are dispensing Opioid Agonist Treatments (OAT). Ophelia Cara will join us to discuss what this means to her and others. To learn more: [You can hear Ophelia and more of her story here at the 40 minute mark of the show.](#)

For the last several years memorial trees have been placed in 3 hospitals in Edmonton. We had an opportunity to expand this to Red Deer this year. As with Edmonton, the number of names that were added to the tribute were overwhelming.

The Metro in Edmonton was host to the film “Love in the Time of Fentanyl”. In addition to this moving film Lorna had another opportunity to provide a showing of “Building Hope: Substance Use in the Trades”. Even for her it was the first opportunity to see it on the big screen! The evening included networking, Naloxone Training, and community presentations.

Our Central AB region MSTH group has spent the last year connecting and getting to know one another. We have accomplished a lot and met some wonderful people along the way. Our first event together was the IOAD Red Deer, hosted by Turning Point and we were invited to participate. The week after IOAD Olds College hosted their IOAD event which we were in attendance for. They held off for a week so the students would be back on campus. Red Deer Polytechnic invited us to set up in the main area along with other service providers for National Addiction Awareness Month. We had many meaningful conversations with students and faculty. February 2023 also saw the introduction of an in-person Healing Hearts in Red Deer.

Our Lethbridge group has been organizing to oppose the hostile environment against unhoused people and people who use drugs in that city. Together with our allies we are out to ensure people are safe and to prevent actions that would further put people at risk. Lethbridge and the entire south region of AB has some of the highest overdose rates in AB, people who are indigenous have been greatly impacted.

Medicine Hat has been moving and shaking as well! Here are some examples of what can be done and how members of MSTH and the Medicine Hat Drug Coalition are turning the proverbial ship around - by Kym Porter, Medicine Hat, AB

Kym's many activities include Naloxone training and talks in the local college and in high schools, small acts of kindness (handing out flowers, chocolates, key tags with encouraging messages attached, serving home made pizza), and letter writing to local organizations and officials. Kym participated in community events providing information and naloxone training (Pride in the Park, July 1st Beat the Heat skateboard competition, Wisdom of Trauma movie screening and IOAD). She helped bring the Addictions Don't Discriminate exhibit to town and she organizes and runs Coats on Finlay with a friend for the 3rd year now. People donate winter gear; we hang it on the bridge and people in need come and take-home warm clothing- free. We all do best when we are aligned with our allies. Kym joined Friends of Medicare and the MH Overdose Response committee and participated in the Point in Time homeless count.

Saving the best for last, Kym is proud to put her dukes up to the 'executive director' of Our Collective Journey, the group here with massive UCP funding to push abstinence-based recovery.

This is just a sampling of the many activities our AB advocates have participated in. We work in close partnership with our allies and are blessed with a smart, strong and supportive harm reduction community.

### **Dorene Loughlin, Marla Merkley and Wendy Little in Red Deer, AB**

Taking down the memorial Christmas tree and seeing all the purple hearts that community members put on the tree was heartbreaking. So many families impacted by the drug poisoning crisis in Alberta.



## **Saskatchewan**

### Statistics:

First to drug toxicity deaths.

- 2016 was the first year Saskatchewan started to report drug toxicity deaths, that first year reported 109 related deaths.
- It has risen exponentially since, 2022 reported 387. That means 32 deaths a month in 2022

- 2023 we are currently looking at 188 to the end of April. That is 47 a month If this trend continues, we could see as many as 560 toxic drug deaths this year alone.

#### Events:

- MSTH in SK continues to make the news, we have strongly advocated for larger distribution of safer supply products, rural communities have limited access, much due to community stigmatizing thoughts that these supplies would increase drug use. Government has made little effort to promote the health side of these products and with that, minimize the infections and disease that comes with cross contamination.
- In Aug of 2022 Saskatoon and Regina harm reduction advocates, including MSTH, put on an IOAD event, a trade show, speakers and a band. The Chiefs of Police and Mayors attended and spoke to the need for better services for persons dealing with SUDS.
- My family and I hosted the 4th annual Prairie Harm Christmas dinner, where a group of volunteers made over 200 meals for clients of Saskatoons on safe consumption site.
- I participated in numerous regional and national focus groups, all related to drug harms and how to minimize them.

#### In the News:

- Regina MSTH advocates were advocating for the family of Shayne Turner. Shayne was a young man who was admitted to Regina General Hospital after a toxic drug related incident. He asked to be sent to detox and treatment, services were denied citing lack of availability. All evidence is suggesting that no call was made to the detox facilities. He was released from hospital and died within hours. Jenny Churchill, a MSTH advocate, met with the family and the SK Coroners service to ask for an inquest into his death. The request was denied; however, the SK Health Authority is working with Jenny to create protocols for access from emergency services to detox and are conducting a review of policies that provide naloxone distribution to persons leaving the hospital after a toxic drug related event. Jenny and crew continue to explore all opportunities to support Shayne's family and prevent this from happening again and again and again.
- Regina Advocates have spent the last year plus supporting vulnerable and at risk clients of a Regina Community Based Organization. Numerous complaints have been filed, including human rights complaints regarding alleged discrimination and mistreatment.
- A Regina Community member represents MSTH at weekly meetings for the SK Health Authorities Overdose Outreach Teams in Regina and Saskatoon, and for the Provincial Naloxone Task Force.

Stronger Together Canada: Saskatoon and Regina continue to host Healing Hearts meetings. Efforts to find facilitators in other communities continue.

Marie Agioritis, that's me, I will be taking on the position as Board Chair of Moms Stop the Harm Canada. We have many plans for this next year that will support the exponential growth we sadly see and the need for supports that align with it.

**Marie Agioritis, from Saskatoon** Bus bench signage & digital billboards for International Overdose Awareness Day in SK.



## Manitoba

To start my annual board report, I want to start it with an acknowledgment to my fellow board members, to all those that came before and to all those that will be joining the board of Moms Stop The Harm. I am grateful to have worked with you this year and to all those that I know from the beginning, it has been a journey and a privilege to have learned something from every single one of you. And to those that are new, welcome to something amazing.

We had a very busy year in Manitoba and I know I will never capture it all. Last year Tammy joined the MSTH board and has been working hard. We are hopeful to have another representative from Manitoba this year as well as Janis has put her name forward. Janis runs our social media and things would not happen without her help. We work very hard in the heart of our country to bring change, education, and awareness. Our Heart beats loud!

Manitoba participated in and hosted many events the past year:

- Black Balloon Day
- International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) event was held at the legislature
- We hosted our second Harm Reduction Fair on the grounds of our legislature. We had Sunshine House bring their Overdose Mobile R.V. (MOPS). The M.O.P.S. MB received a federal exemption for a site.
- We were able to get our NDP to delay Bill 33 that would have seen the government involved in the Supervised Consumption Site (SCS) in a way that would not be helpful. That delay will get us through to our Provincial election in the fall.

- We held a purple chair event and sent a small chair Minister Bennet.
- The purple chair event is very impactful here, I still have my chair out front on my boulevard by my tree. I have many people stop and read the message. I think it has worked well to help people remember. We put one in our city garden. The garden was a very valuable gift that we received from our former Mayor. We have been adding memory stones to it every year. It is a place that people can go and add painted rocks, flowers and messages. This garden gives mother's, father's, families and loved ones a reason to get out of the house. Families celebrate birthdays there and we do a vigil there on August 31st for IOAD
- We have started the Purple Poppies campaign, they are lovely paper poppies that have room for messages. The idea is that we collect these paper poppies and we place them on a white board in a shape of a river. The river flows to Ottawa with messages from our loved ones who are Gone Too Soon of what they want, what we want - a safer supply. Someday I hope it will have a place in the Human Rights Museum in Manitoba and perhaps even Ottawa.

I attended the St Johns, Tailgate Program and would love to have this program to launch in MB. I'm hoping with my family contacts who have been in the trades for 40 years, that we can help launch this program.

MSTH is building a good relationship with our Harm Reduction Community and our Indigenous community. I attend monthly meetings and we participate at events when invited. We are a great team, I'm able to learn so much from them and I am able to introduce my whiteness into new places to collaborate.

We were excited to be a part of a Harm Reduction conference in November. Aptly named "A Shit Disturber Is An Act Of Love". We made paper poppies and left them on the tables for everyone to leave messages for those Gone Too Soon.

Winnipeg had a civic election in the fall and a new Mayor was elected. I am so happy to say, I just received an invitation for a meeting. We are in the process of arranging meetings of our Mobile Overdose Prevention Van with our Police Chief, City Councillors and hopefully the new Mayor.

Any hope for change here weighs heavily on the NDP assuming power in our province... Wab Kinew is someone I support and who has been a huge supporter of mine. Together we hope for a better future for all our families. The NDP was successful in getting the Drug Death Related Bereavement Act passed for the week before Mother's Day. We are grateful for this acknowledgment in this time of crisis. In Manitoba someone dies every single day.

I know there is much more, it really has been a good year for advocating in MB and we are very excited about this coming year. Our focus this coming year will be:

- A permanent SCS

- A safe supply, either through the government, or The Compassion Clubs
- And always; compassion, love and hope.

I know with all my heart that Moms Stop The Harm will bring the change that is needed, remembering why we started.

Music has been so important to me, I want to share some song titles that I listen to, as part of my journey. These song reminds me why we all do what we do.

- Dancing in the Sky by Dani and Lizzy
- The Wolves by Madeline Edwards
- Hang on by Blackbird Valley
- Colors by Black Plumas



Hugs from Manitoba.

MSTH Manitoba leader Arlene Last Kolb was one of several other MSTH members who was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal for Manitoba in recognition of her valuable contribution to her home province.

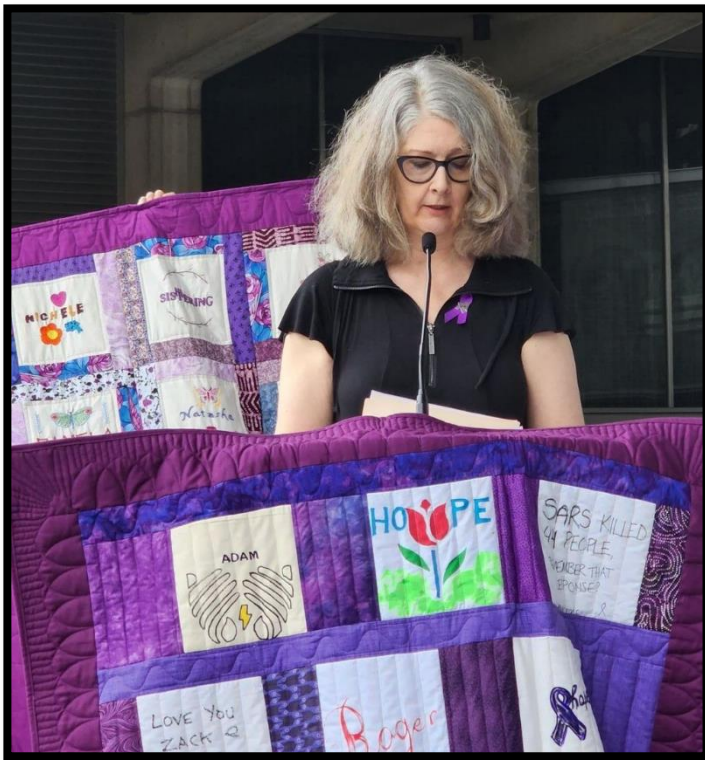
Her valuable contribution to the province of Manitoba is her dedicated work towards raising awareness and fighting stigma and doing what she can every day to change drug policies to end the toxic drug poisoning crisis that is killing so many of our loved ones.

## Ontario

This year's ON report is provided by former director Sheila Jennings, which shows that our retired directors are still very active in advocacy.

I spoke at IOAD 2022 held at the Toronto City Hall and read a poem I wrote "Think of Me". I also lectured on the overdose/drug poisoning crisis in a lecture at ON Tech University in my course Canadian Human Rights Law. I will be lecturing again on the topic this spring in the course Disability and The Law at Toronto Metropolitan University.





Sheila Jennings at IOAD in Toronto, ON

I also sat on three Family Research Engagement Panels at CAMH (The Centre for Mental Health and Addiction). I hold the role of a Family Research Adviser as a family member with lived experience on the Citizen Panel at CAMH in relation to issues involving substance use/addiction. I was in this role also on a panel regarding the role of Pharmacy/pharmacists in the drug poisoning crisis (CAMH). I am in a Family Research Advisory role on a project on Cognitive problems that arise in the context of addiction (CAMH).

I am a Family Research Engagement Advisor on OUTLOUD, which is a large funded project out of Ottawa. This has to do with palliative care for folks who use(d) drugs. This has been ongoing with involvement in advising on parts of the

project and discussion with the ethicist on the project around safeguarding PWUD in research projects. Here's a link to this large research project:

<https://pcpcrc.ca/studies/observing-understanding-and-telling-stories-at-the-end-of-life-for-opioid-use-disorder-patients-outloud-a-mixed-methods-study/>

October 2022 I met with Leslie McBain and the academic Addictions leadership at Centre for Addiction and Mental Health along with the CAMH Addictions policy advisor. The aim was to address with CAMH any existing barriers to the needed offering of a Safe Supply Heroin Program through that teaching Hospital. In 2022 I also reviewed grant applications for government for funding of research projects on ways to improve the delivery of services and supports to people who use substances and those close to them.

## Quebec

In 2022-2023, MSTH advocates from QC were very busy, several presentations were made to federal, provincial and municipal authorities regarding the decriminalization of simple possession of drugs, with the aim of advancing the motion adopted by the elected officials of the city of Montreal in January 2021. We continue to work in our spheres of influence, including our places of work and recreation, and our communities at large to change the hearts and minds of our peers. We have regularly spoke out very publicly on a variety of issues, from overdose prevention to education and awareness, to defending the rights and health of people who use drugs. QC

advocates also reached out internationally at the Drugs, Health and Justice Summit held in Brussels in September 2022.

Here's a look at some of the major advocacy, education and support activities that QC MSTH advocates spearheaded and participated in over the past 15 months:

- Radio interview on Radio-Canada's Le Genre Humain: <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/ohdio/premiere/emissions/genre-humain/episodes/618224/rattrapage-du-samedi-2-avril-2022/4>
- Speaking at the National Day of Action: Take Action Against Overdose, May 26 at Frontenac Metro <https://www.newswire.ca/fr/news-releases/journee-nationale-d-action-contre-les-surdoses-a-montreal-852498991.html>
- Interview on teaching naloxone administration to high school students: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/mtl-naloxone-opioids-overdose-1.6489220>
- <https://montreal.citynews.ca/video/2022/06/16/training-teens-to-administer-naloxone/>
- Interview on the decriminalization of simple possession of drugs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4BPK-kcP0E>
- Meeting with Elizabeth Brière, federal Liberal MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, August 17, 2022
- Speaking engagement on International Overdose Awareness Day and collaboration in the implementation of the illumination project (Champlain Bridge and other buildings in Montreal and elsewhere in the province), August 31, 2022
- Meeting with Soraya Martinez, Member of Parliament for Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, regarding the decriminalization of simple possession of drugs, on September 6, 2022
- Participation in the International Summit on Drugs, Health and Justice in Brussels on September 26 and 27, 2022, for a round table on the criminalization of drug users
- Webinar on safer supply in Quebec with various stakeholders in the harm reduction community on September 29, 2022, <https://www.nss-aps.ca/safer-supply-quebec>
- Participation in the recording of video clips for the INSPQ aimed at breaking down the stigma of people who use drugs, intended for health care workers October 4, 2022
- Stronger Together Canada: retreat and team meeting in Edmonton on October 14-15, 2022, for the development and strategic planning of program activities
- Met with municipal officials to discuss decriminalization of simple possession of drugs on October 19, 2022
- Documentary on overdoses in La Presse, October 22, 2022, by journalist Philippe Mercure <https://www.lapresse.ca/grands-reportages/surdoses-l-epidemie-invisible>
- Guest on the tv the set of Tout le monde en parle on Radio-Canada on October 23, 2022 <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/tele/tout-le-monde-en-parle/site/segments/entrevue/419639/philippe-mercure-surdoses-droque-epidemie>
- Rima Elkouri's column on the stigma surrounding overdose grief, October 23, 2022, <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/chroniques/2022-10-23/l-epidemie-invisible/isabelle-et-sa-petite-renarde.php>

- Second article by Rima Elkouri in response to the stigma and prejudice surrounding substance use on October 26, 2022, <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/chroniques/2022-10-26/surdose-de-prejuges.php>
- Decriminalization: webinar and participation in a round table at the Quebec Addiction Summit in Longueuil on October 25, 2022
- Taking a stand on the overdose crisis: <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/recit-numerique/4780/quebec-lutte-epidemie-surdoses-judiciaire-programmes>
- Presentation of the Moms Stop the Harm organization and the Stronger Together program during a workshop at the Addiction Summit on October 25, 2022
- Participated in a panel discussion on the place of abstinence in the recovery process at the Addiction Summit on October 26, 2022
- Presentation of the organization to the Verdun Committee on Homelessness on October 28, 2022
- Stimulus Connect: Webinar: Safe Supply, Decriminalization and Harm Reduction in Quebec on November 29: <https://stimulusconference.ca/stimulus-connect/>
- Preparation of a video on stigmatization with the Association des Intervenants en Dépendance du Québec in March, 2023.
- Discussion forum on Chapter 15 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act in Quebec City, March 28, 2023
- engagement with paramedic services on the use of suboxone as a potential pre-hospital treatment for symptom relief of withdrawal (ongoing advocacy)
- National Day of Action against overdoses: April 6, 2023: national press conference and militant march.

I AM FOCUSED,  
PERSISTENT  
AND WILL NEVER  
QUIT.

## Maritimes

Membership in Atlantic Canada has been expanding over the last year with many new members in all provinces, and our first ever members in Newfoundland. Michelle H and Mary K have been making waves in the media with the national action event on bereaved Mother's Day and the event they held for International Overdose Awareness Day. These powerful advocates are also working on starting a Healing Hearts and a Holding Hope group and Michelle, who also sat on the board, was one of the speakers at the Support Don't Punish virtual event earlier this year.

Both Katie Upham (NS) and myself attended the Moms Stop the Harm Conference and AGM in Vancouver in June, and we were both featured on separate [Sickboy podcast](#) episodes and

participated in the [NSSCoP](#) Safe Supply meeting in Halifax, also in June. We were both on the planning committee and I had the honour of moderating a panel discussion, in which Katie was a panelist.

Members from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick gathered in Saint John for International Overdose Awareness Day in August and a local Saint John member, Melissa G and I also put up a MSTH Memorial Christmas Tree at the [Avenue B](#) candlelit memorial on December 1st. Melissa painted the purple chairs for our IOAD event as part of our national purple chair campaign. We have Holding Hope groups in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia that continue to meet virtually.

As for my own activities, I have been speaking to various groups, mostly in healthcare, about harm reduction and ways to reduce stigma to improve health services and outcomes for people who use substances. I sit on a toxicology interest group committee and chair the Saint John Chief of Police Community Action Group Substance Use subcommittee whose main area of focus is public education on harm reduction. I recently joined a regional Harm Reduction Task force and I represent MSTH on PRUDE's All Women project which is aimed at removing barriers for women in the Saint John area with a specific focus on newcomers and those who are victims of gender-based violence and/or living in poverty. I also co-facilitate New Brunswick's only Holding Hope support group.

So far in 2023 things have been busy with the Community Action Group activities with event planning, with several public events lined up for the spring and summer. I represented Moms Stop the Harm as a judge at the University of New Brunswick's case competition, as well as a Stimulus meet in Moncton, NB. I have several speaking events lined up in the coming months, it is shaping up to be another eventful year.

Ways that I would like to engage Atlantic members include:

- Recruiting more Holding Hope and Healing Hearts facilitators so that we can expand as we grow
- Recruiting new Board of Director members from Atlantic Canada who can take over when my term is up.
- Identify advocates who would like to use their voice to speak to the media and hold local events
- Identify advocates with a First Nations background so that we can provide more support and advocacy to the FN communities



Our PWUD panel at the in person nss\_cop /SUNAR event with our lovely moderator and MSTH leader for NB Emily Bodechon!

Emily Bodechon, MSTH Atlantic Director, Giulia DiGiorgio, Cape Breton Association of People Empowering Drug Users (CAPED) Founder, Undoing the Harm Project Manager and SUNAR member, Katie Upham, SUNAR's Harm Reduction Educator and Emily Wadden, Program Manager of Safe Works Access Program (SWAP), AIDS Committee of NL and SUNAR member

## Stronger Together – updates from our federal & provincial projects

Stronger Together is a hard-working team of dedicated staff members, all with lived experience who continue to grow the number of peer support groups we have across Canada. The number of engagement and learning opportunities for not only MSTH members but also group facilitators and participants as well as for the public at large. Currently we have 37 Healing Heart groups, and 3 online groups for those who's communities don't have a local group meeting. Healing Hearts groups is support for those who have lost a loved one to substance use harms. We have also established 37 Holding Hope groups and 3 virtual groups. Holding Hope is support for those who have a loved one struggling or working on their recovery. Pieces of our teams' work is showcased throughout this report.



[Find a Healing Hearts Group](#)

[Start a Healing Hearts Group](#)



[Find a Holding Hope Group](#)

[Start a Holding Hope Group](#)



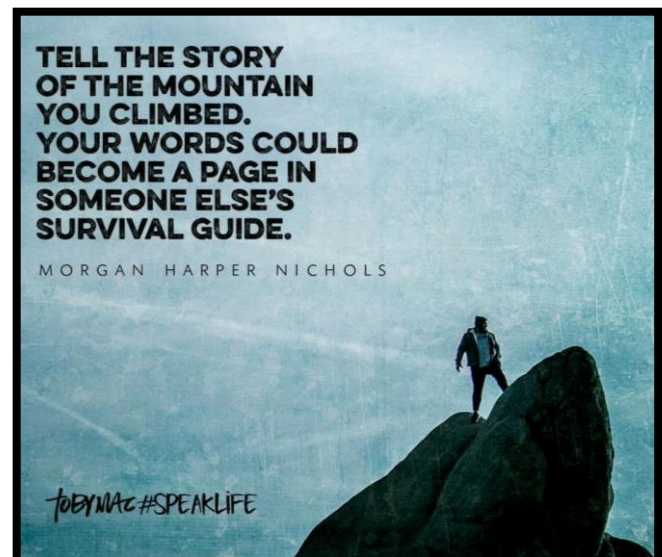
## MSTH takes action! Review of last year...

- ✓ May 2nd - Bereaved Mother's Day: virtual concert (Jill Cooper),
- ✓ IOAD Facebook frame
- ✓ Facebook Live Stream IOAD Candlelight Vigil
- ✓ Support Safe Consumption Sites (Alberta - letter writing petition to Jason Kenney)
- ✓ Support Safe Consumption Sites Day of Action Protest - June 26
- ✓ Victoria BC Rallies for change! July 2021
- ✓ #CanadaVotes2021- Report Card
- ✓ Legal Action against the province of Alberta to prevent the implementation of harmful new regulations for consumption site, including the collection of health numbers
- ✓ Drug War Armistice Day - Alberta (December 2022)
- ✓ Open Letter to Federal Minister Carolyn Bennett (January 2022)
- ✓ MSTH & DULF Protest - Vancouver August 31
- ✓ Katherine Steinhoff - action updates
- ✓ Healing Hearts and Holding Hope Testimonial for report
- ✓ UBC Research Study with families supporting a loved one with substance use
- ✓ Safe Supply Round Table with Federal Minister Carolyn Bennet
- ✓ Stronger Together Canada - receive SUAP funding to expand supports to families across Canada
- ✓ New national websites developed for Holding Hope & Healing Hearts Support
- ✓ Still Dying for Access Protest in Edmonton Alberta November 2022
- ✓ Black Balloon Day across Canada August 2022
- ✓ International Overdose Awareness Day in a multitude of cities across Canada
- ✓ "Each & Every" Businesses for Harm Reduction - Alberta
- ✓ CANADA VOTES 2021! Questions to ask regarding the drug poisoning crisis.
- ✓ WE NEED DECRIM DONE RIGHT! - an open letter regarding the proposed Vancouver model of Decriminalization.
- ✓ Federal and Provincial petitions
- ✓ Federal Election Letter writing campaign

### Are You an Activist?

"An activist is someone who cannot help but fight for something. That person is usually not motivated by a need for power, or money, or fame, but in fact driven slightly mad by some injustice, some cruelty, some unfairness - So much so that he or she is compelled by some internal moral engine to act to make it better"

Eva Ensure



- ✓ Bill C- 216
- ✓ Support the Bill to Decriminalize People Who Use Drugs
- ✓ Call For Urgent Action On The Drug Poisoning Crisis In Edmonton!
- ✓ Rally for Change - Victoria BC
- ✓ Say Yes to SCS! Actions in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta
- ✓ MSTH calls on federal party leaders for positions on overdose crisis (City Council Petition)
- ✓ Tell Jason Kenney how you feel about his decision to cut #HarmReduction while four Albertans die from #DrugPoisoning every day!

MSTH Educational Webinars:

- ✓ June 2021 - Dr. Jennifer Charlesworth, BC Bill 22 - The risks of involuntary care for youths
- ✓ International Overdose Awareness Day (July) - Info session on how to plan an event in your community.
- ✓ Drug Users Liberation Front of BC - November 2021



L-R Chatelaine Magazine’s October edition featured Leslie Mcbain and Petra Schulz who shared their stories and truths to readers across the country.

Our hope is that this helps us reach more families and move the dial toward evidence-based drug policy. More than 29,000 families lost someone between Jan. 2016 and Sept 2021 and these women advocate hard every day to change drug policies to stop the toxic drug deaths and to raise awareness and end overdose and change drug policies.

## Financial statements

**MOMS STOP THE HARM SOCIETY**  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
For the 15 months ended March 31, 2023

	March 31, 2023	December 31, 2021 (Audited)
	\$	\$
<b>Assets</b>		
Current		
Cash	563,889	538,006
Accounts Receivable	6,142	1,083
Prepaid Expenses	-	200
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>570,031</b>	<b>539,289</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current		
Payable and accruals	32,104	17,373
Deferred revenue	420,990	414,639
	453,094	432,012
<b>Members' equity</b>	<b>116,937</b>	<b>107,277</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Members' Equity</b>	<b>570,031</b>	<b>539,289</b>



	2022	2021 - 12 Months (Audited)
	\$	\$
<b>Revenues</b>		
CAI - Canadian Action Initiative	259,260	164,018
SUAP - Government of Canada Substance Use and Additions Program	156,889	98,140
Interior Health	155,000	-
Donation Revenue	66,019	62,892
First Nation Elder Honoraria Fund	-	23,000
Miscellaneous Income	1,397	656
Other Grants	23,566	-
BC Provincial Funding - Membership Engagement	17,456	-
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>679,587</b>	<b>348,706</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
<b>MSTH General</b>		
Accounting and legal	27,824	18,300
Advertising and promotion	14,244	11,353
Bank charges and interest	556	1,910
Bookkeeping	6,139	9,169
Computer expense	1,051	11,491
Contractors	600	126,122
Honoraria fees	4,290	14,031
Insurance	4,396	1,857
International Overdose Awareness Day	5,541	6,410
Office and miscellaneous	8,312	18,130
Salaries and related benefits	22,021	64,005
Supplies	572	6,582
Support groups	1,396	8,854
Training	401	14,231
<b>Total MSTH Expenditures</b>	<b>97,343</b>	<b>312,445</b>
<b>Project Expenditures</b>		
CAI BC	234,689	-
SUAP	205,195	-
Interior Health	40,821	-
BC Grant	99,528	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>677,576</b>	<b>312,445</b>
<b>Excess of revenues over expenditures</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>36,261</b>

## Thank you to our donors

- Health Canada Substance Use & Addictions Program (SUAP)
- BC Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions
- BC Interior Health



- ❖ Drugs the Musical
- ❖ Keeley Milne – long distance runner
- ❖ WA Architects Ltd.
- ❖ Petra Schulz
- ❖ Leslie McBain
- ❖ Edmonton Eskimos Alumni
- ❖ Arlete Alcook CD proceeds

Paypal/E-transfer/Cheque

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvX6dynxl6U-bZyTH-M4zXg>

