



WINDSOR-ESSEX  
COMMUNITY  
**OPIOID &  
SUBSTANCE**  
STRATEGY

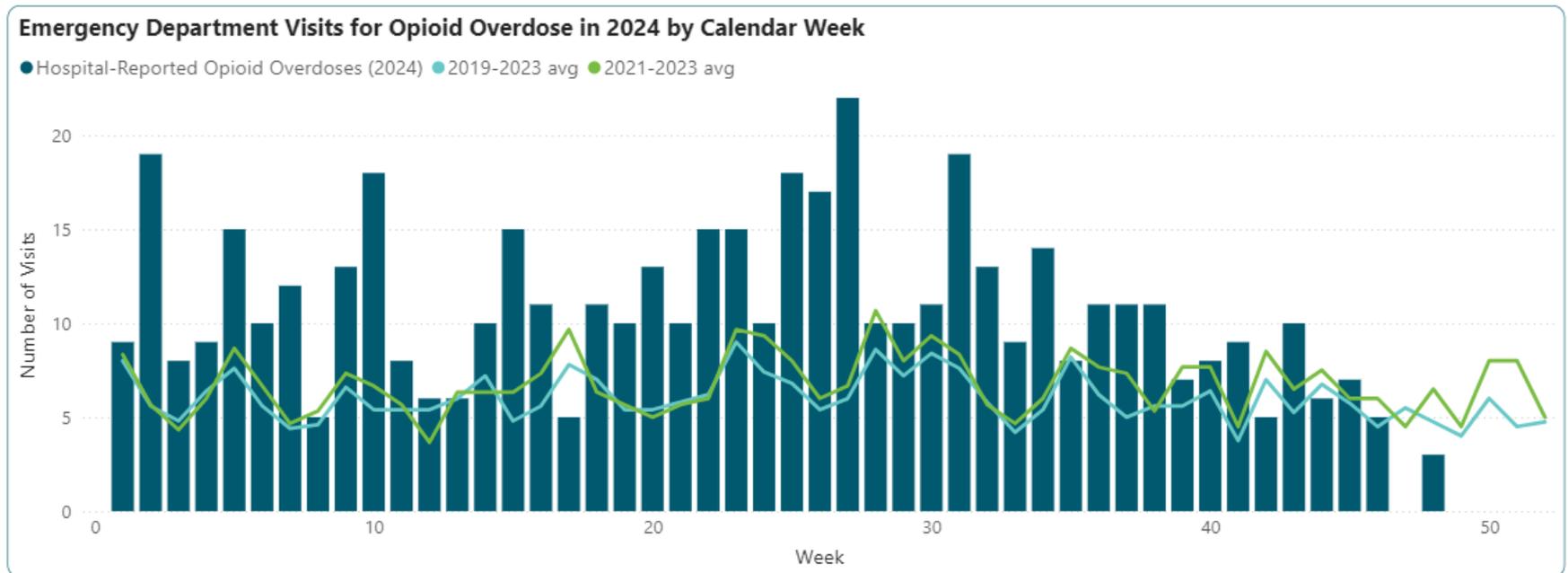
# WECOSS Leadership Committee Meeting

*Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.*

# Opioids and Substances Data Dashboard Review

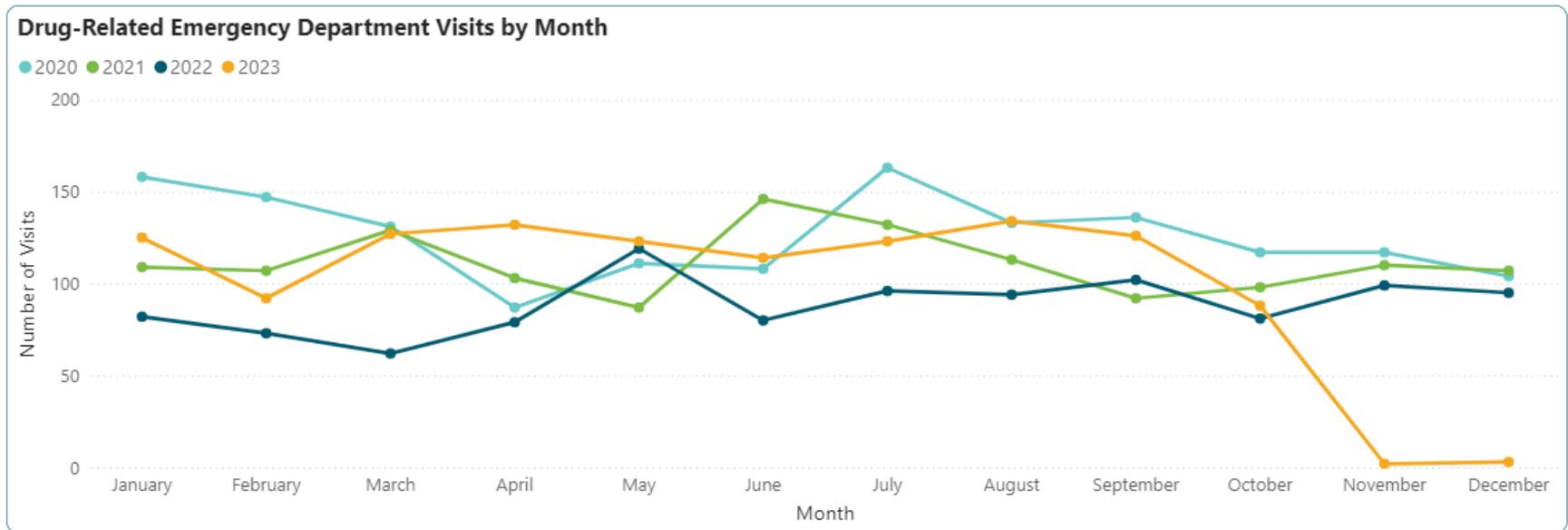
*(J. Bradt)*

# Emergency Department Visits for Opioid Overdose by Calendar Week



\* 2024 data reflects the number of opioid overdoses reported directly by local hospitals. Prior to 2024, Ministry of Health (MOH) data was used for number of of opioid overdoses in the ED and is reflected in the historical averages in the trend lines above. Because the cyberattack precluded collecting data from week 41 forward in 2023, the five-year average for 2019-2023 used only 2019-2022 for weeks 41 forward, and the three-year average for 2021-2023 used only 2021-2022 for weeks 41 forward.

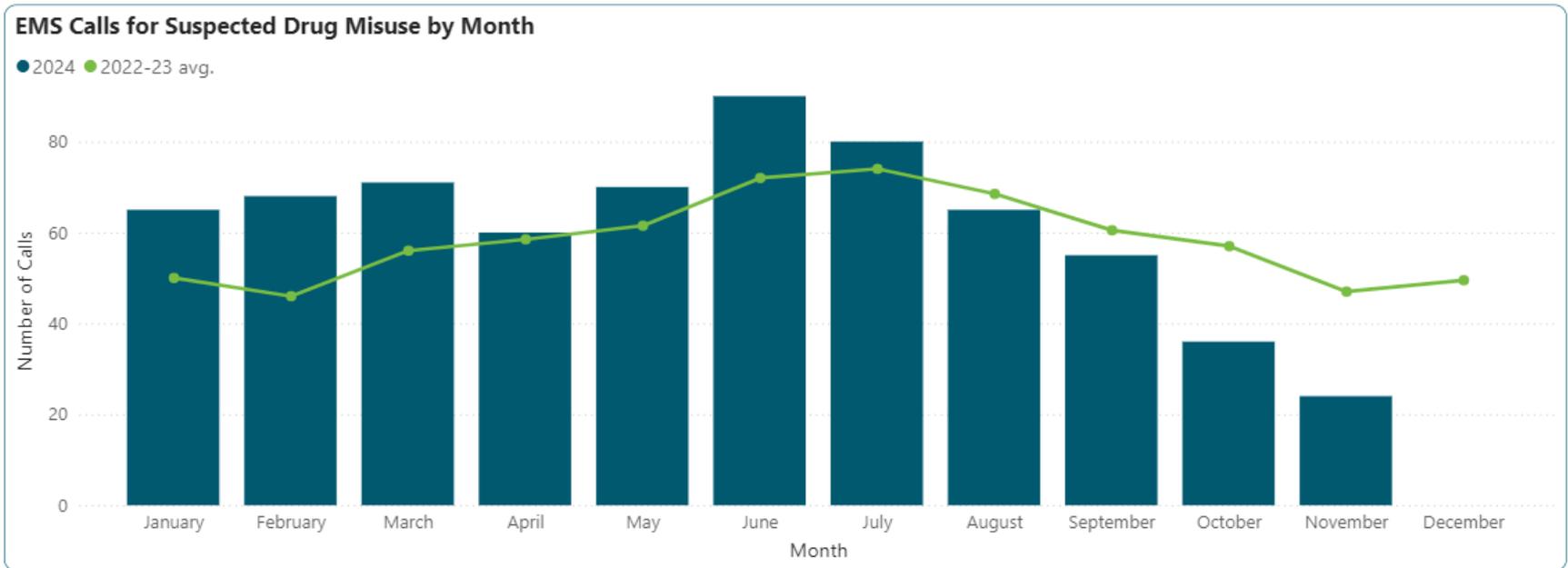
# Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits by Month



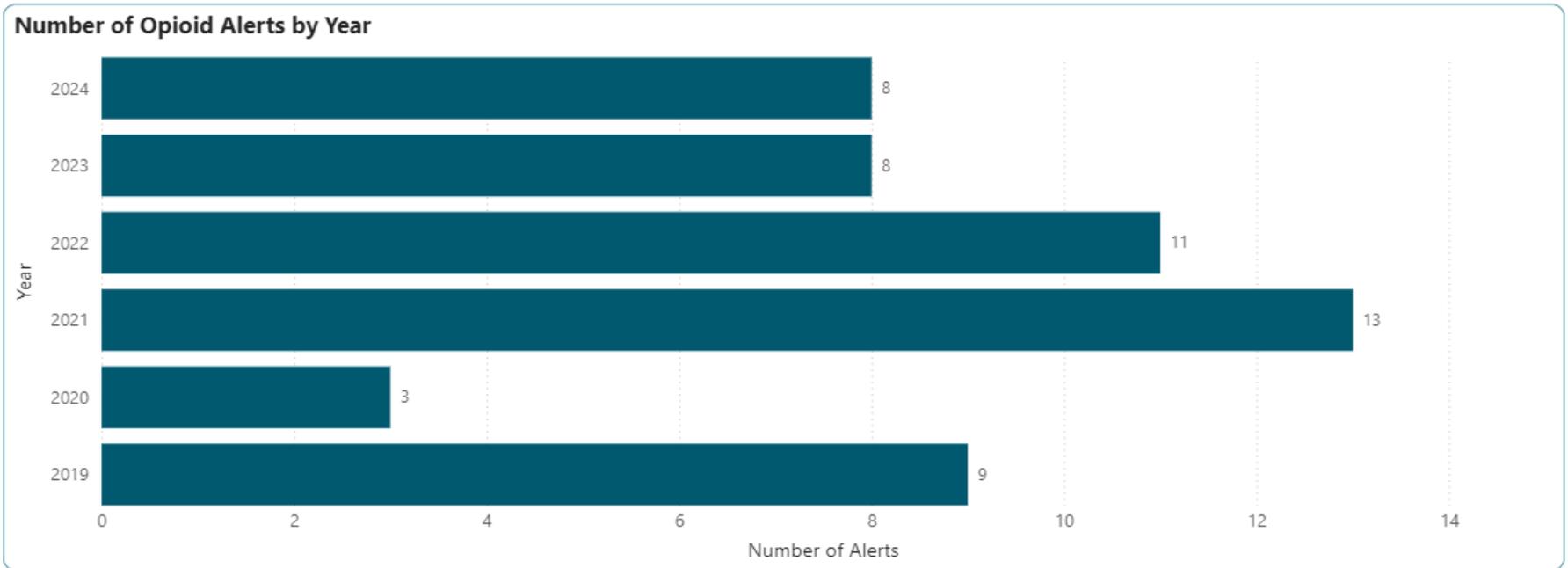
# EMS Calls for Suspected Opioid Overdose by Month



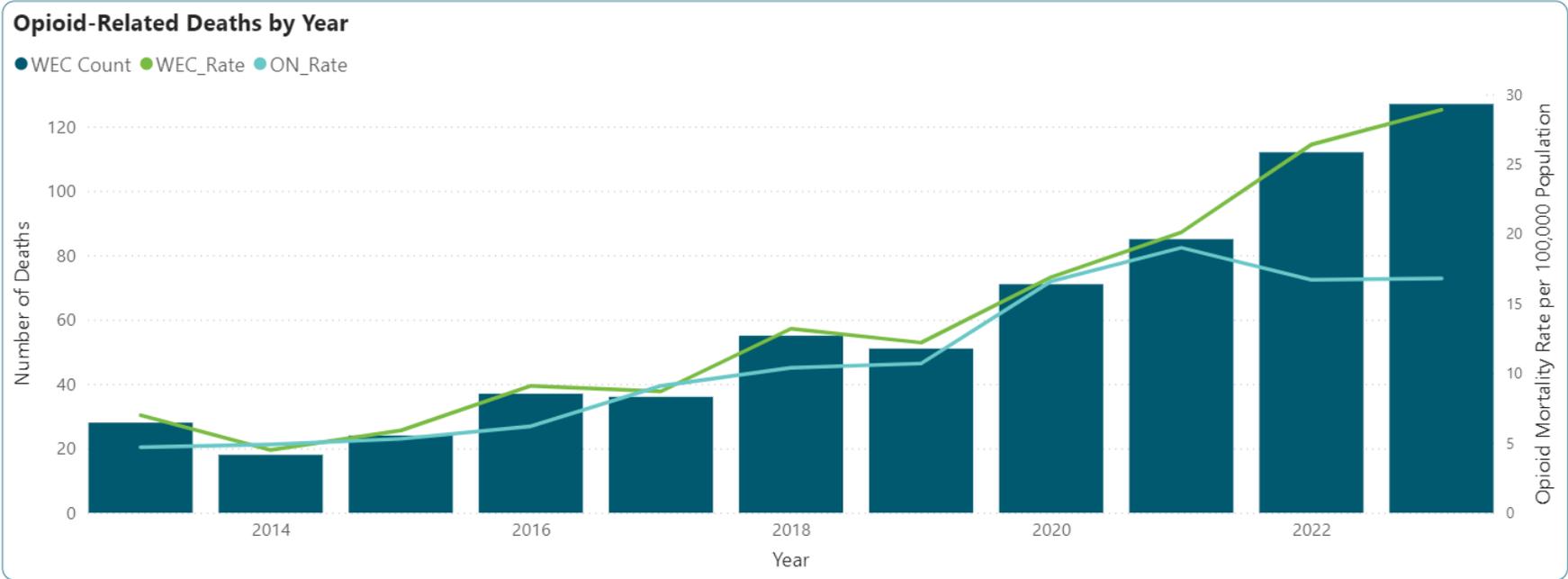
# EMS Calls for Suspected Drug Use by Month



# Opioid Alerts by Year



# Opioid-Related Deaths by Year in Windsor-Essex County and Ontario



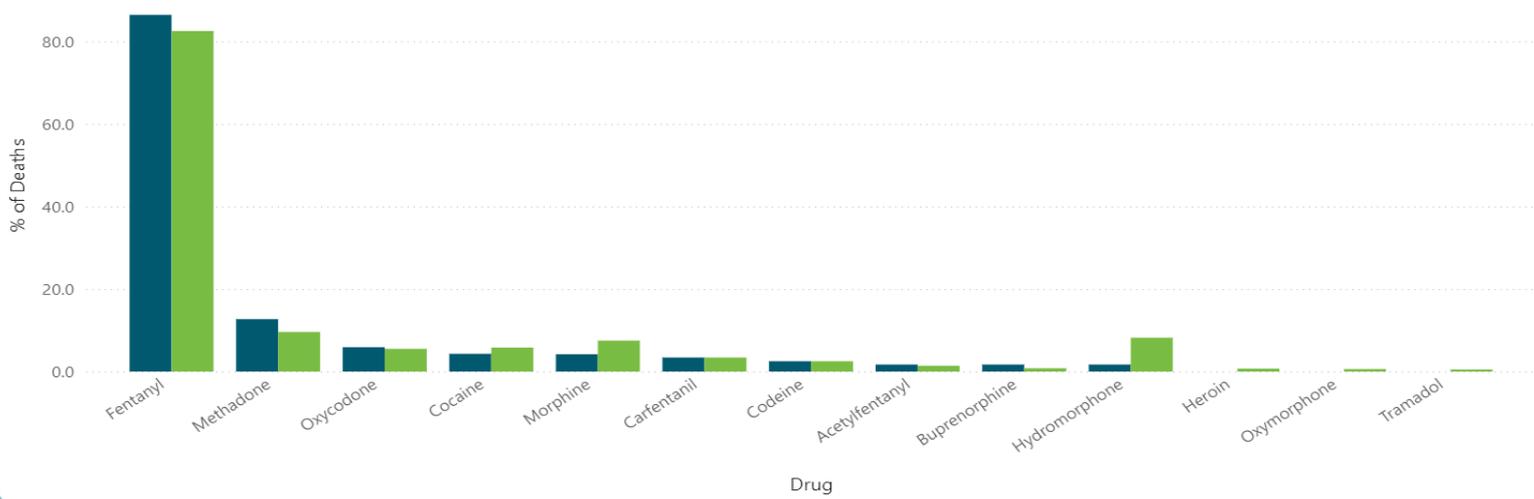
# Opioid-Related Deaths by Type of Opioid Present at Death and Manner of Death (2023)

**Opioid-Related Deaths by Manner of Death (2023)**

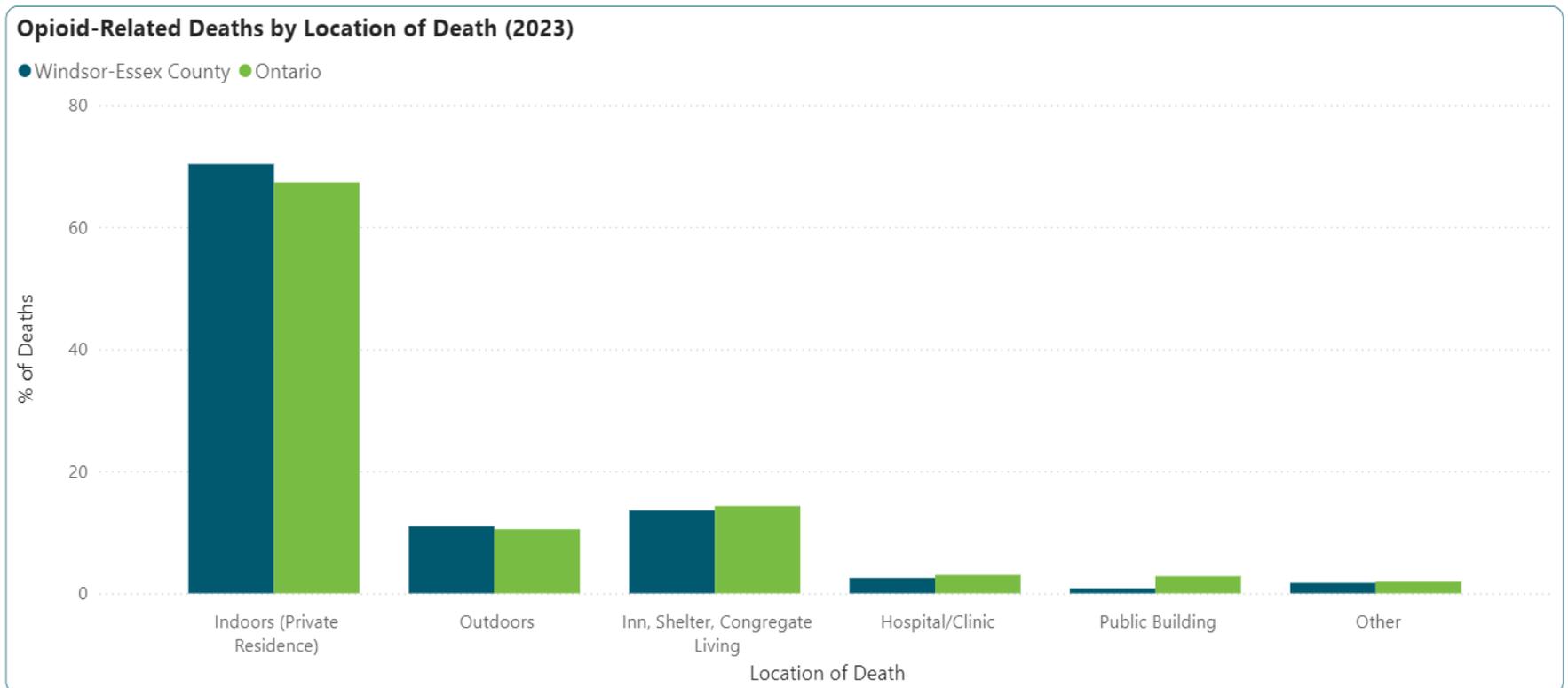
Quarter	Accidental	Suicide	Undetermined	Pending
1	28	0	1	2
2	33	1	0	2
3	30	1	0	4
4	19	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>

**Opioid-Related Deaths by Type of Opioid Present at Death (2023)**

● Windsor-Essex County ● Ontario



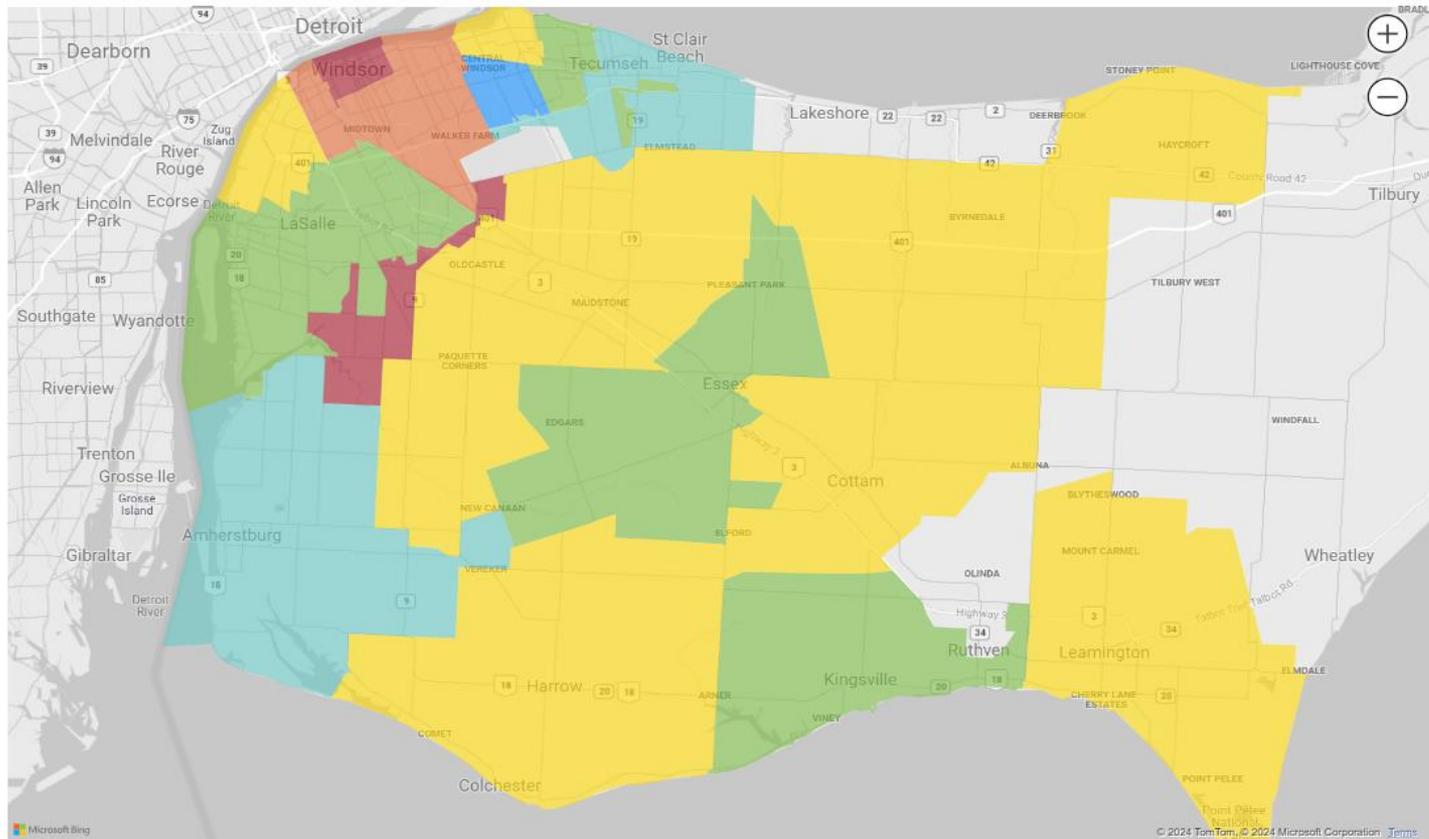
# Opioid-Related Deaths by Location of Death (2023)



# Opioid-Related Deaths by FSA (2020-2023)

Number of Opioid-Related Deaths by FSA (2020-2023)

Number of Deaths ● 00-04 ● 05-07 ● 11-20 ● 21-30 ● 8-10 ● over 30



# Opioid and Substance Use Notification System (OSUNS) Updates

1. Update alert materials to address substance use-related knowledge gaps.
2. Expand alert poster distribution to include high traffic areas in Windsor's Downtown Core to increase visibility and awareness of alerts.
3. Explore additional communication channels for alerts including advertising options and text message subscriptions.
4. Explore opportunities for regular peer and/or community feedback, engagement, and outreach.

# WECOSS Working Group and Sub-Committee Updates

# Harm Reduction Working Group Updates

# Harm Reduction (A. Adams)

## 2024 Project Updates

### 2024 Project: *Community Overdose Prevention Training Events*

- ❖ **Purpose:** To provide community members with naloxone kits and training and other overdose response/prevention education and resources.
- ❖ **Nine** community overdose prevention training **events** held from **March to November:**
  1. **New Song Church Event** (March 22<sup>nd</sup>)
  2. **Windsor International Aquatic Centre Event** (April 24<sup>th</sup>)
  3. **Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative Bruce Park Event** (July 2<sup>nd</sup>)
  4. **Glengarry Community Housing Event** (July 25<sup>th</sup>)
  5. **Legal Assistance of Windsor Event** (August 16<sup>th</sup>)
  6. **St. Clair Centre for the Arts Event** (August 21<sup>st</sup>)
  7. **Glengarry Community Care Fair** (November 14<sup>th</sup>)
  8. **Glengarry Community Care Fair** (November 15<sup>th</sup>)
  9. **Safety Village Event** (November 19<sup>th</sup>)
- ❖ Events were held with the **public/residents, staff** at community agencies, **downtown businesses/agencies, and the construction industry.**
- ❖ **123 naloxone kits** distributed, **124 individuals trained** on naloxone administration, and **595 drug test strips** distributed at events.
- ❖ **Evaluation report** with results from participant surveys to be prepared before **year-end.**

# Harm Reduction (A. Adams)

## *2025 Project Proposal*

### 2025 Project Proposal: *Building Community for Harm Reduction*

#### Background:

- ❖ The **Windsor-Essex County** area has been **disproportionately affected by opioid toxicity events and related harms**, surpassing provincial opioid mortality rates for six consecutive years from 2018-2023.
- ❖ The growing need for harm reduction services is more evident now than ever before; however, despite increasing harms, recent legislative changes in Ontario have **reduced the availability and accessibility of harm reduction services** for people who use drugs.
- ❖ The current rhetoric surrounding harm reduction is creating significant barriers for people who use drugs to access the care that they need to stay safe and well.
- ❖ In light of these changes, **local action is needed** to continue to educate the community about the importance of harm reduction practices, dispel harmful ideologies surrounding harm reduction, and advocate for use of harm reduction models within applicable community settings.

# Harm Reduction (A. Adams)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal: *Building Community for Harm Reduction*

**Purpose:** Implement a comprehensive community education/anti-stigma campaign on harm reduction as a valued and evidence-based practice to support people who use drugs and the community.

#### Goals:



Improve community knowledge and awareness about harm reduction, lower-risk use methods, and overdose response/prevention strategies.



Dispel harmful ideologies and reduce stigma towards harm reduction practices.



Increase use of harm reduction models within community service settings.



# Harm Reduction (A. Adams)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal: *Building Community for Harm Reduction*

#### Project Activities:

1. Develop an education campaign plan outlining key activities and methods for engaging the community around harm reduction (e.g., media marketing, community service workshops, peer engagement, policy/position statements).

2. Develop, promote, and distribute campaign content and materials.

3. Continue to collaborate with community partners to deliver overdose response/prevention and safer consumption training events.

4. Evaluate the efficacy of the campaign and its training activities in achieving project goals.

# Discussion

1. Is the 2025 project proposal reflective of community needs? Are the appropriate project activities proposed to address these needs?
2. Are there other project activities that the Working Group should consider?
3. What stakeholders might we engage in this work?

# Prevention and Education Working Group Updates

# Prevention & Education (J. Bradt/K. Willis)

## 2024 Project Updates

### 2024 Project: *Continuous Communication Campaign*

- ❖ **Purpose:** To promote shared messaging about substance use and the WECOSS across the community.
- ❖ **Continuous communication toolkit** and **social media calendar** shared with WECOSS membership.
- ❖ **19 campaign messages** posted on WECHU social media channels over June to September, with a total of **29,352** reaches on Facebook.
- ❖ **4 additional social media messages** issued in November – performance data is forthcoming.
- ❖ **Three-month block of in-transit bus advertisements** on approximately 10 buses in Windsor's downtown core released over September to December.
- ❖ **Six-week block of Google display advertisements** issued over September to November, with a total of **429,765** reaches.
- ❖ **Evaluation report** in-progress with key results from campaign.

# Prevention & Education (J. Bradt/K. Willis)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal:

#### *Community Engagement for Substance Use Prevention and Health Promotion*

##### Background:

- ❖ **Comprehensive community strategies** that use a variety of **prevention and health promotion** approaches have emerged as a **promising best practice** to reverse upward trends in substance use-related harms ([CCSA, 2013](#)).
- ❖ Combined, these strategies prevent or delay substance use by addressing known **risk and protective factors** across the life span, tackling the **root causes** of substance use (e.g., poverty, childhood adversity, school/family environments, social isolation), and reducing **socio-economic inequities** related to use.
- ❖ **Perceived barriers** to developing a **comprehensive substance use prevention and health promotion (SUPHP) strategy** locally have been reported across the WECOSS partnership:
  - ❖ Lack of common understanding regarding the community's strengths, needs, and priorities related to SUPHP, especially following the pandemic.
    - ❖ Who is involved and how? Where are resources allocated? Where are investments most needed?
  - ❖ SUPHP is multi-layered and intersects with work occurring across various sectors, but there are gaps in coordination across these sectors and concerns about duplication of work.

# Prevention & Education (J. Bradt/K. Willis)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal:

#### *Community Engagement for Substance Use Prevention and Health Promotion*

#### **Purpose:**

Engage the community around a comprehensive and coordinated SUPHP strategy for Windsor-Essex County (WEC).

#### **Goals:**



Increase key community stakeholders' understanding of the current availability, arrangement, and distribution of SUPHP services across WEC.



Identify community needs, gaps, and priorities for SUPHP and established best practices to meet these needs.



Solidify community readiness and stakeholder support for a comprehensive, multi-sectoral SUPHP strategy for WEC.



Develop and acquire community endorsement for a SUPHP plan for the community.

# Prevention & Education (J. Bradt/K. Willis)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal:

### *Community Engagement for Substance Use Prevention and Health Promotion*

#### Project Activities:

1. Conduct a multi-sectoral community assessment to identify local strengths, needs, priorities, and community readiness for a comprehensive/coordinated SUPHP strategy.

2. Complete an evidence review of established best practices at the provincial, national, and international levels for addressing community needs related to SUPHP (e.g., Icelandic Prevention Model).

3. Use findings from the community consultation and evidence review to plan a strategic community approach with an accompanying evaluation framework for SUPHP.

4. Gather local endorsement of the SUPHP strategy for implementation in 2026 and beyond.

# Discussion

1. Is the 2025 project proposal reflective of community needs? Are the appropriate project activities proposed to address these needs?
2. Are there other project activities that the Working Group should consider?
3. What stakeholders might we engage in this work?

# Treatment and Recovery Working Group Updates

# Treatment & Recovery (E. Dulmage/J. Lear Zylstra)

## 2024 Project Updates

### 2024 Project: *WEC Connect Program and Service Inventory*

- ❖ **Purpose:** To create a locally-developed online program and service inventory that can support system navigation and service access until coordinated access models become available.
- ❖ The **WEC Connect Online Inventory** was officially launched on **October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024** at a **2-1-1 training event:** [https://wecoss.ca/wec\\_connect](https://wecoss.ca/wec_connect).
- ❖ The inventory includes **substance use, mental health, and behavioural addiction services** available at the **local, provincial, and national levels**, both **publicly and privately funded**.
- ❖ The inventory was promoted through various media engagement activities, advertisements on buses and social media, and print materials.
- ❖ Between **October 23<sup>rd</sup> and November 12<sup>th</sup>**, there were **3,311** visits to the WEC Connect page on WECOSS.ca. Social media advertisements had over **22,000** reaches, **3,100** engagements, and **220** link clicks.
- ❖ If interested in promotional materials for WEC Connect, please contact [tsarkis@wechu.org](mailto:tsarkis@wechu.org).
- ❖ Next steps involve **continued partnership** with **2-1-1** and the **WE-OHT** for sustainability of the inventory, data sharing, and connectivity between programs.

# Treatment & Recovery (E. Dulmage/J. Lear-Zylstra)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal: *Expanding Access of Opioid Agonist Therapies (OAT)*

#### Background:

- ❖ Although the Windsor-Essex County area has seen **drastic increases** in **opioid-related mortality rates** over the last five years, the **rate of new users to OAT** year by year has remained **relatively low**.
- ❖ Annually, there were **no significant differences** observed in **rates of new users to OAT** from **2021 to 2023** (rates ranged between 2.91 – 3.00 per 100,000 population).
- ❖ Anecdotally, community partners involved in the WECOSS have reported that OAT is an **underutilized service** locally.
- ❖ Perceived barriers related to this underutilization include:
  - ❖ **Knowledge gaps** among health and social service providers about OAT
  - ❖ **Stigma** surrounding opioid use disorders and OAT as a care modality
  - ❖ **Confidence and skill level** of service providers to identify and appropriately support individuals who may benefit from OAT

# Treatment & Recovery (E. Dulmage/J. Lear Zylstra)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal: *Expanding Access of Opioid Agonist Therapies (OAT)*

#### Purpose:

Support improved use and access of OAT among those with opioid use disorder.

#### Goals:



Improve knowledge and awareness amongst health and social service providers about OAT as an evidence-based care method for people living with OUD.



Increase confidence and skill level of service providers to facilitate supportive and judgement-free conversations with clients/patients who may benefit from OAT.



Create additional clinical/care pathways across the health and social service system to support clients/patients in gaining timely and low-barrier access to OAT.



# Treatment & Recovery (E. Dulmage/J. Lear-Zylstra)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal:

### *Expanding Access of Opioid Agonist Therapies (OAT)*

#### Project Activities:

1. Identify organizations and/or service providers to engage for OAT education and training (e.g., ED, primary care, independent physicians, shelters, pharmacies).

2. Develop and deliver relevant education/training and resource materials to service providers.

3. Collaborate with community partners to create, implement, and promote additional care pathways for OAT across health and social service settings.

4. Evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of service provider education resources and care pathways established through this project.

# Discussion

1. Is the 2025 project proposal reflective of community needs? Are the appropriate project activities proposed to address these needs?
2. Are there other project activities that the Working Group should consider?
3. What stakeholders might we engage in this work?

# Enforcement and Justice Working Group Updates

# Enforcement & Justice (J. Rafuse)

## 2024 Project Updates

### 2024 Project: *Substance Use in Corrections Workshops*

- ❖ **Purpose:** To support successful reintegration of justice-involved individuals who use/d substances back into their communities through education to corrections officers, post-secondary students, and service providers.
- ❖ **Four** substance use in corrections **workshops** offered in 2024:
  - ❖ **South-Essex Community Council (April 12<sup>th</sup>)**
  - ❖ **Southwest Detention Centre (June 20<sup>th</sup>)**
  - ❖ **St. Clair College (Police Foundations Students) (September 27<sup>th</sup>)**
  - ❖ **University of Windsor (School of Social Work) (November 21<sup>st</sup>)**
- ❖ In total, **197** individuals participated in one of the four workshops.
- ❖ **83%** of evaluation respondents across all workshops indicated that they had **increased confidence** to support people who use substances following their session.
- ❖ Currently exploring opportunities to continue workshops in 2025.

# Enforcement & Justice (J. Rafuse)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal: *Strengthening Community Safety and Well-Being*

#### Background:

- ❖ In 2024, the **SSNAPP team** released a set of **neighbourhood safety plans** targeted to high-risk areas for opioid overdose in the City of Windsor.
- ❖ Early results from the **safety plan evaluations** suggest that **further engagement** with the target neighbourhoods would be beneficial to ensure that recommended strategies are **well-understood** by community members and can be **practically integrated** into their lives.
- ❖ **Expansion to other neighbourhoods** was also cited as an area to improve for the future.
- ❖ In consultation with SSNAPP, opportunities have been discussed to **continue safety plan engagement/expansion through the EJWG** following the completion of the SSNAPP grant in March 2025 and until further grants are pursued.
- ❖ Activities that have been identified for additional engagement in 2025:
  - ❖ Training and support strategies for **community housing units** to assist with safety plan implementation in target areas across Windsor.
  - ❖ Expansion of the safety plans to **Leamington** as a high-risk area for opioid overdose in Essex-County.

# Enforcement & Justice (J. Rafuse)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal: *Strengthening Community Safety and Well-Being*

#### Purpose:

Support implementation and expansion of the neighbourhood safety plans developed through SSNAPP.

#### Goals:



# Enforcement & Justice (J. Rafuse)

## 2025 Project Proposal

### 2025 Project Proposal: *Strengthening Community Safety and Well-Being*

#### Project Activities:

1. Collaborate with partners to identify community housing units to target within safety plan areas in Windsor for additional training and implementation support.

2. Develop and deliver training and support strategies to community housing based on identified needs for units.

3. Engage and gather endorsement from key stakeholders to develop a neighbourhood safety plan targeted to the Leamington area (e.g., Municipality of Leamington, OPP).

4. Develop and distribute a neighbourhood safety plan for Leamington based on area needs.

5. Evaluate the effectiveness of safety plan engagement and expansion activities in meeting project goals.

# Discussion

1. Is the 2025 project proposal reflective of community needs? Are the appropriate project activities proposed to address these needs?
2. Are there other project activities that the Working Group should consider?
3. What stakeholders might we engage in this work?

# WECOSS Leadership Committee Partnership Evaluation

# Background

- ❖ In the Summer of 2024, a **partnership evaluation survey** was distributed to the WECOSS Leadership Committee.
- ❖ The purpose of the survey was to gather input from members on the **effectiveness of the WECOSS-LC partnership** and to identify **opportunities to improve** the strategy moving forward.
- ❖ The survey was **adapted from previous evaluations** conducted with the WECOSS, the last survey occurring with the Leadership Committee in **2020**.
- ❖ The survey examined three dimensions of the WECOSS-LC partnership – **Process & Structure, Group Functioning, and Membership Participation**.

# Partnership Evaluation

## *Method, Scoring, and Analysis*

### Method

- The survey examined member agreement with 24 items related to the three dimensions of the WECOSS-LC partnership.
- Open-ended questions were also included to capture additional comments.

### Scoring

- Levels of agreement with the 24 items were assessed using Likert-scaled response options ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”.
- For scoring, responses were converted to a Likert-scaled scoring system ranging from 1-5, with 1 equaling “Strongly Disagree” and 5 equaling “Strongly Agree”.

### Analysis

- Using the numeric scoring system, average scores for each dimension were computed.
- Average scores at 3.5 or above were considered satisfactory and those below 3.5 were considered areas for improvement.
- Open-ended responses were also summarized for discussion.

# Partnership Evaluation

## Results

### 2024 WECOSS Leadership Committee Evaluation Results

*Total Responses = 14\**

Partnership Dimension	Average Score
Process and Structure	4.02
Group Functioning	4.00
Membership Participation	3.89

**\*Incomplete responses were excluded from the analysis.**

# Partnership Evaluation

## Results

### Partnership Dimension: *Process & Structure*

Assessment Item	Average Score
The WECOSS has a clearly defined goal or purpose.	4.07
The Action Plan (2018) and Modernization (2021) accurately capture the short- and long-term actions of the WECOSS at present.	4.07
The short and long-term actions of the WECOSS are based on key community needs.	4
The WECOSS-LC monitors progress on the short- and long-term actions effectively.	3.86
The roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the WECOSS-LC are clearly defined and understood.	4
The WECOSS-LC has a clear and effective decision-making process.	4.14

# Partnership Evaluation

## Results

### Partnership Dimension: *Process & Structure*

Assessment Item	Average Score
The WECOSS is adding value (rather than duplicating services) for my clients, the community, or the agencies involved.	3.71
The structure of the WECOSS (i.e., Leadership Committee and Pillar-Based Working Groups) is effective for accomplishing the work of the Strategy.	4.14
The Terms of Reference promotes accountability among members.	4.14
Members have the resources needed to advance the goals of the WECOSS.	3.93
The group has the right stakeholder representation (the right organizations involved and/or the right makeup of people).	4.14

# Partnership Evaluation

## Results

### Partnership Dimension: *Group Functioning*

Assessment Item	Average Score
The communication from the backbone agency is timely and efficient and the methods of communication are effective.	4.29
All members have the opportunity to contribute to goal and action planning.	4
All members actively participate in meetings, projects, and/or activities.	3.71
The group's tasks and responsibilities are assigned and distributed fairly to members.	3.86
The group's leaders (Co-Chairs, Coordinators) effectively support members in completing tasks and activities.	4
The group monitors and evaluates progress toward goal attainment effectively.	4.14
Conflicts between members and/or their respective organizations are addressed effectively.	4

# Partnership Evaluation

## Results

### Partnership Dimension: *Membership Participation*

Assessment Item	Average Score
I am satisfied with my current role in the WECOSS-LC.	4
I am comfortable with my level of participation in the WECOSS-LC.	4
The WECOSS-LC meetings are a productive use of my time.	3.93
I feel that I am part of the decision-making process of the WECOSS-LC.	3.64
I am satisfied with the current plans that the WECOSS has in place for achieving its goals.	3.79
My participation in the WECOSS means that I can have a greater impact than I could on my own.	4

# Partnership Evaluation

## Results

### Open-Ended Questions

#### Recommendations to Improve Process & Structure

- Frame outcomes/successes and associated strategies of the WECOSS around how individuals feel about their community
- Align strategies with community needs and best practices
- Enhance communication
- More community/training events collectively amongst partners
- Meaningful engagement of peers

#### Membership Recommendations

- Indigenous representatives
- Enhancing involvement with policing services
- Improve coordination between other relevant committees/groups

#### Benefits to Participating in the WECOSS

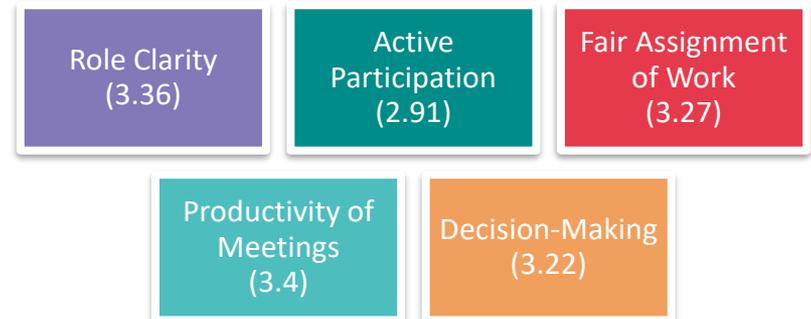
- Partnership, coordination, and collaboration across multiple agencies
- Creating links for clients on new and emerging services/supports
- Knowledge and information-sharing
- Support of internal initiatives

# Summary of WECOSS Working Group Partnership Evaluation Results

## 2024 WECOSS Working Group Partnership Evaluation Results *Total Responses = 11\**

Partnership Dimension	Average Score
Process and Structure	3.79
Group Functioning	3.63
Membership Participation	3.62

## Items Scored as Areas for Improvement



# Discussion

## Areas for Improvement (WECOSS-LC):



## Areas for Improvement (Working Groups):



**What actions are needed or can help improve these aspects of the partnership?**

**Are there other areas missing from this list that require further attention?**