



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

WECOSS Treatment and Recovery Working Group: 2025 Project Proposal

*Expanding Access of Opioid Agonist
Therapies (OAT)*

Background

- ❖ Although the Windsor-Essex County area has seen drastic increases in opioid-related morbidity and mortality rates over the last five years, the rate of new users to OAT treatment 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 treatment locally.
- ❖ Perceived barriers related to this underutilization include:
 - ❖ Knowledge gaps among health and social service providers about OAT
 - ❖ Stigma surrounding opioid use disorders (OUDs) and OAT as a treatment option
 - ❖ Confidence and skill level of service providers to identify and appropriately support individuals who may benefit from OAT

Project Purpose and Goals

Purpose:

Support improved use and access of OAT amongst those who are eligible and seeking treatment for OUD in our community.

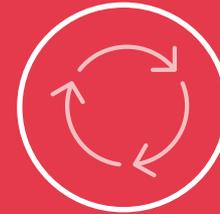
Goals:



Improve knowledge and awareness among health and social service providers about OAT as an evidence-based treatment for people living with an 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.



Strategic Alignment

Modernization Priority #2

- Formalize healthcare provider engagement and education as key drivers in addressing substance use

Modernization Priority #3

- No Wrong Door: Enhancing Access to Services and Supports

Modernization Priority #5

- Address the social determinants of health that impact substance use and community well-being

Target Populations

Primary Audience

- Service providers who support people who use opioids (e.g., emergency departments, primary healthcare, independent physicians, shelters, pharmacists)

Secondary Audience

- People who use opioids

Project Activities



Discussion

1. As members of the TRWG and service providers in our community, what is your current confidence level to facilitate conversations with clients about OAT and make connections to this service? How is this currently being done at your organization?
2. Is the 2025 project proposal reflective of community needs? Are the appropriate project activities proposed to address these needs?
3. Are there other project activities that the TRWG should consider to help improve use and access of OAT locally?
4. What kinds of stakeholders might we engage in this work?