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# Media Release



## **Together We Can: International Overdose Awareness Day August 23, 2024 - For immediate release**

Observed at the end of August, International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) is a day of remembrance for the people whose lives have been altered by drug poisoning/overdose. This year on **Thursday, Aug 29**, communities in Timiskaming will come together again to recognize the power of community in stopping the harms of overdose.

Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy (TDAS) and local partners take this chance to promote understanding of drug poisoning and to call for action to prevent further harm. We encourage members of the community, especially those with lived experience, to come together and to stand in solidarity with those who have been affected by overdose. We seek to reduce the stigma of drug-related deaths and create change that prevents the harms of substance use.

This year on the Overdose Awareness Day, partners in Timiskaming are putting a spotlight on three collaborative events.

- Starting at **3 p.m.** at the Toburn Mine property, the **Kirkland Lake** event includes free outdoor BBQ, live music, naloxone education, drug testing kits, and harm reduction services brought by our partners. In addition, the Town of Kirkland Lake will bring purple lighting to its gateway board to commemorate the day.

A memorial will take place for those who suffered and those who took action to stop the preventable deaths. Anyone is welcome to take part. This event will be joined by Pavilion Women's Centre (PWC), the Salvation Army, Northeastern Recovery Centre, No More KL, Timiskaming Health Unit (THU), TDAS, and Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA).

- On the same day from **9 – 11 a.m.**, the event in **Temiskaming Shores** will take place in front of the Centre de santé/CMHA building at 20 May St S. The event includes an art project led by PWC, which allows people and service providers to remember loved ones through arts and conversation. Information, resources, naloxone kits, and training will be provided on-site by local partners.

This event will be joined by THU, TDAS, The Salvation Army, CMHA, the District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board (DTSSAB), Timiskaming Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Zack's Crib, Cam's Club, and Mino M'shki-ki Indigenous Health Team.

- A smaller gathering in **Englehart** will take place from **12 – 1:30 p.m.** This event will take place in Centennial Park, near 3<sup>rd</sup> St and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. Free promotion items, memorial board, naloxone and harm reduction training, snacks, and refreshments will be provided by THU, joined by the Englehart Family Health Team, the Salvation Army, CMHA, and PWC.

Erin Cowan, Co-Chair of the Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy, stated, "The drug poisoning crisis we have witnessed in recent years has profoundly affected many. In 2023 alone, we lost nine community members to opioid-related causes. These community events held each year on IOAD

commemorate the lives lost to the opioid crisis and affirm the community's commitment to facing substance-related harms in a comprehensive and collaborative approach."

"The people in our communities have been our greatest resource in dealing with the complexities of the drug crisis." says Anthony Gilpin, Chair of the TDAS People with Lived Experience Committee. "This year's IOAD theme is 'Together We Can,' which is exactly the attitude we need to stop overdoses." "We should start conversations and take solid actions. Together, we can make a difference and save lives. It takes all of us."

TDAS serves as a multi-sectoral initiative with members representing mental health and addiction treatment services, Indigenous services, people with lived experience, social services, family health teams, hospitals, school boards, law enforcement and justice, public health, and many others in our community. Our collective efforts aim to prevent and reduce the harms associated with substance use and improve the quality of life of all Timiskaming residents.

To learn more about the local events, please find us on the Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy Facebook page. For more information on local services, please visit: <https://www.tdas.ca/>

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