

Calgary CCENDU Report

Highlights 2004

Prepared by: Darlene James

Calgary is the largest city in Alberta. While most residents live within the city limits, the census metropolitan area encompasses neighbouring municipalities, rural areas and the Tsuu T'ina Nation 145 reserve.

The site of the Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Abuse in Calgary (Calgary CCENDU) remains inactive, and only minimal information is available to update previous reports. The data presented in this summary derive from secondary sources (e.g., health and police administrative databases), and are limited by differences in the time frames and geographic boundaries used for reporting.

Prevalence

- No new survey data on substance use in Calgary are available for 2003–04.

Enforcement

- The Calgary Police Service (CPS) reports that drug offences declined 18% between 2002 and 2003 (from 2,213 to 1,814). This decrease is attributed to a substantial drop in possession offences.
- CPS noted that 2003 marked the first time in five years that trafficking offences (871) outnumbered possession offences (826).
- Cannabis grow operations are becoming more prevalent in Calgary and surrounding communities. According to CPS, the only recorded increase in drug offences (15%) between 2002 and 2003 was for cannabis cultivation and production (from 101 to 116).
- Cocaine and crack continue to be popular in Calgary. Between 2002 and 2003 there was a slight decline in the number of cocaine (15%) and crack-related (18%) incidents. However, the value of cocaine and crack seized by police increased during this period.
- Cannabis-related incidents in Calgary declined 18% between 2002 and 2003 (from 1,074 to 885). Again, however, the value of cannabis seized

by police increased during this time frame.

- Incidents involving drugs other than cocaine/crack or cannabis decreased 37% between 2002 and 2003 (from 189 to 119).
- Over half of all persons charged with drug offences in Calgary in 2003 were under 25 years of age.
- The Criminal Intelligence Service of Alberta reports that a number of organized crime groups are operating in and around Calgary. These groups are heavily involved in the production and trafficking of a variety of illicit drugs, particularly cocaine and cannabis.

Treatment

- Client statistics from the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) show that in 2003–04, 1,288 youth received outpatient or intensive treatment in Calgary. The majority reported using cannabis (92%), alcohol (89%) and/or tobacco (59%) in the previous year. Fewer youth clients reported using psychedelics (38%), amphetamines/stimulants (23%) or cocaine (20%).
- In 2003–04, 5,433 adults accessed AADAC outpatient counselling services in Calgary. Most clients reported using alcohol (85%) and/or

tobacco (57%) in the previous year. Many clients also reported the use of cannabis (47%), cocaine (35%), opiates (24%) and/or anti-depressants (22%).

- In 2003–04, 2,199 adults accessed Calgary detoxification services. A large proportion of clients reported using alcohol (82%), tobacco (64%), cocaine (56%) and/or cannabis (39%) in the 12 months prior to treatment.
- In 2003–04, there were 229 clients receiving methadone treatment from the AADAC Opioid Dependency clinic in Calgary. Of these clients, 42% reported using drugs by injection in the previous 12 months.

Morbidity

- Information from the Calgary Police Service shows that alcohol was a factor in 1.4% of all reported collisions in 2003 (those resulting in fatality, injury and property damage).
- The number of alcohol-involved collisions in Calgary decreased 16% between 2002 and 2003 (from 514 to 432).

Mortality

- In 2002, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in Alberta reported 63 deaths in Calgary caused by alcohol or other drugs (including methanol). This compares with 49 deaths reported in 2001.
- In 2002, the Medical Examiner investigated 18 deaths where alcohol and/or other drugs (including methanol) were a contributing or complicating factor. This is an increase from 10 cases in 2001.

HIV/AIDS/HEP C

- In 2003, 59 newly diagnosed cases of HIV were reported in the Calgary region. This represents 37.6% of all cases reported in Alberta, and is a slight increase from the number in 2002 (51).

- Safeworks in Calgary reports that in 2003, 399,724 needles were distributed, 479,883 needles were returned, and the agency had 20,254 client contacts. Since 1997, Safeworks has seen yearly increases in the number of needles exchanged and the number of clients accessing exchange services.

