

OUTCOME REPORT

2018 Canada-U.S. Roundtable on Strategies to Combat the Opioid Crisis

The Pew Charitable Trusts
Washington, D.C.
September 24, 2018



On September 24, 2018, over 100 senior level participants from governments, health care, civil society, academia and industry met in Washington, D.C. for the inaugural *Canada-U.S. Roundtable on Strategies to Combat the Opioid Crisis*. The event exchanged best practices in innovation to address problematic opioid use, including prevention, treatment and recovery, and identified opportunities for collaboration, such as surveillance, research, training and standards.

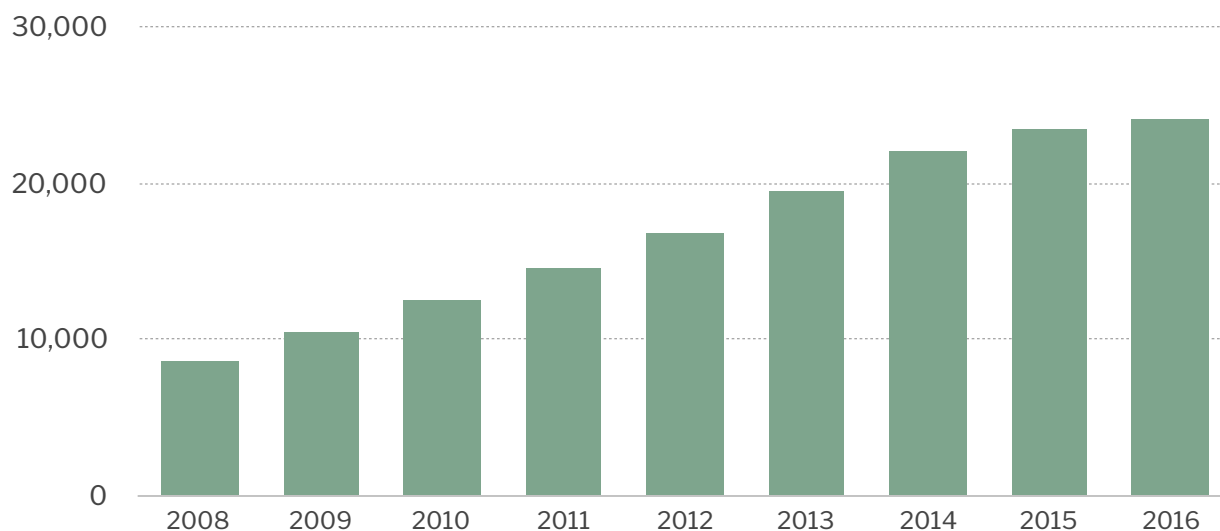
The Canada-U.S. relationship is unique in the world, marked by a shared border, common values and deep economic, security and cultural ties. In recent years the two nations have begun to share a devastating trend: the rise in opioid-related deaths and opioid substance use disorders.

The Opioid Roundtable addressed the dramatic increase in the prevalence of opioid misuse and an increase in fentanyl and heroin-related overdoses in both countries, and discovered that

communities across the United States and Canada are taking a public health approach to address the opioid crisis.

Throughout the day, common goals were identified, including: the prevention of new cases of problematic opioid use, early intervention, increasing access to treatment and recovery services and continued expansion of data collection.

Babies Born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome in the U.S.



AHRQ HCUP State Inpatient Databases

We Cannot Arrest Our Way Out of the Crisis

Multiple speakers and participants addressed the ideological shift away from policing the opioid crisis and the necessity of coordination among public health, public safety and social services to ensure people living with opioid use disorder are placed on a stable path to recovery. Communities across the United States and Canada, such as East Bridgewater and Plymouth, Massachusetts and

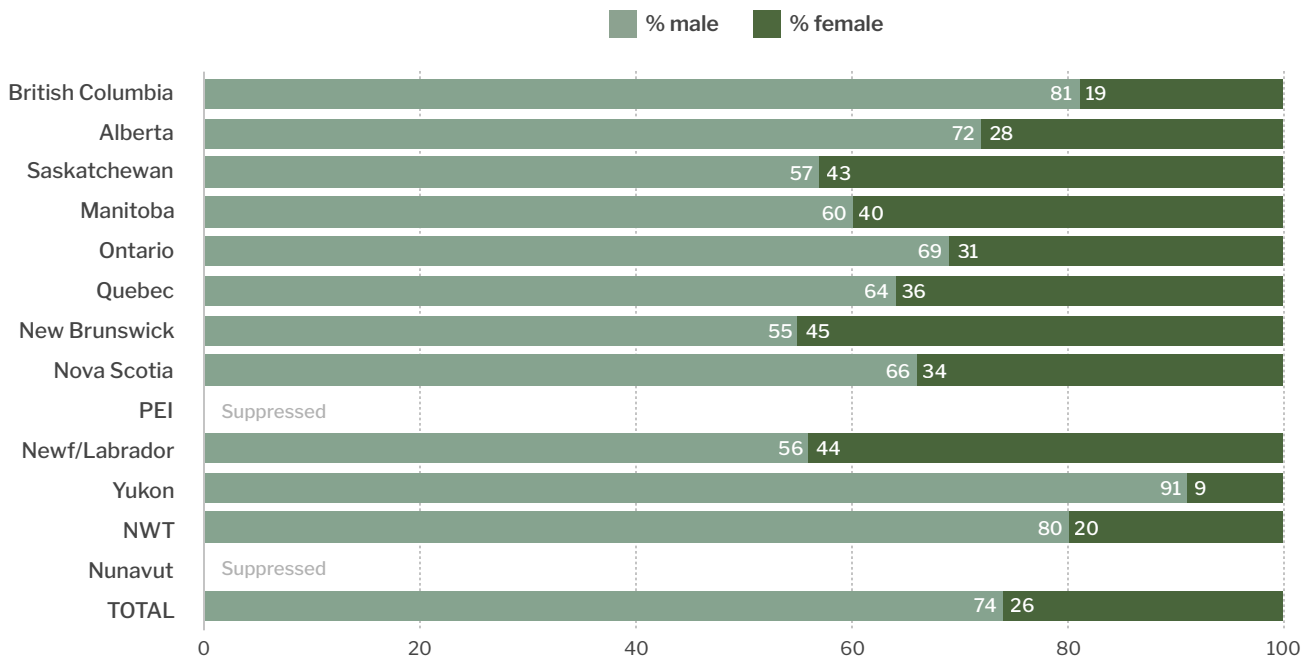
Vancouver, British Columbia, are taking a holistic approach, in which victims are linked with treatment and recovery services instead of entry or re-entry into the justice system. While stressing the importance of public health and public safety coordination, participants acknowledged the practice is evolving and inconsistent across regions or countries.

The Power of Data to Foster Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration and Improve Outcomes

Speakers including Ohio’s Lt. Governor Mary Taylor described the power of data as a critical tool to strengthen our collective response to the opioid crisis. Increasing data collection has allowed for more accurate identification of problems and solutions, the creation and delivery of services, and fostering coordination between public health and

law enforcement. Both countries are dealing with an average six-month delay in data collection on opioid-related deaths and analysis but are able to collect close to real-time data at the federal level. With regard to the needs of rural communities, innovation and creativity are required and there is a potential role for telehealth in providing care.

Sex Distribution of Apparent Opioid-Related Deaths in Canada



National Report: Apparent Opioid-Related Deaths in Canada (December 2017)

Building Bridges Through Lived Experience

The Roundtable featured powerful personal stories from North Dakota First Lady Kathryn Helgaas Burgum, Baltimore Peer Support Coordinator William Miller and Ohio Lt. Governor Mary Taylor. Throughout the event, speakers and participants emphasized the importance of integrating people with lived experience into systems of care, as well as peer-to-peer support.

Their stories served as a reminder that rehabilitation is a long process that looks different for everyone and, as Ms. Burgum noted, “addiction is not a choice and it is not a character flaw.” Participants agreed that a central goal is to address the harmful stigma associated with addiction, as it impedes individuals from seeking help.

Innovation is Happening, but Scaling Innovation Remains a Challenge

The Roundtable highlighted excellence in innovation from both sides of the border, in areas that include treatment, care and recovery for people living with opioid use disorder. In several cases, speakers addressed the need to break down structural barriers to encourage innovation, often

through new policies and regulation reform. Participants described the challenge in scaling innovation from the local level across regions and borders. Information sharing and collaboration, together with agreed-upon metrics for success, were viewed as critical to scaling innovation.

Better Treatment and the Need to Stay Ahead of the Curve

Speakers and participants noted the “pendulum swing” from opioid over-prescribing to significantly reduced prescribing and, possibly, under-prescribing and its contribution to the market for illicit drugs such as synthetic fentanyl. In panel discussions, speakers emphasized the need to pay attention to: the pain crisis that underlies the

opioid crisis; access to medically-assisted treatment and recovery; appropriate psycho-social factors that underlie problematic opioid use; understanding needs of different patient populations; educating future healthcare providers in addiction medicine; and widespread data collection to create guidelines for treatment.

A Call to Action: The Opioid Crisis and Children

A number of panels addressed the devastating impact of the opioid crisis on infants, children and youth from a variety of perspectives — from babies born to mothers with opioid use disorder, to children living with grandparents in place of parents suffering from opioid dependence, to adolescents becoming more susceptible to

synthetic laced opioids. Speakers from both countries, including Admiral Brett Giroir, U.S. Assistant Secretary for Health, and Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, described new initiatives to address the unique needs of children, as well as expectant mothers.

Next Steps

The Canada-U.S. Opioid Roundtable helped foster a necessary cross-border dialogue that must continue beyond the meeting itself. The Roundtable highlighted the importance of collaboration across jurisdictions and disciplines to better address the opioid crisis. Cross-Border Health, the World Health Innovation Network and

the Council of the Great Lakes Region intend to continue building bridges between communities in Canada and the United States and in key cross-border regions, and look forward to consulting with stakeholders regarding future opportunities to engage and learn from one another.

Key Links

Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Spotlight on Opioids

https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/sites/default/files/Spotlight-on-Opioids_09192018.pdf

Health Resources and Services Administration: Addressing Opioid Use Disorder in Pregnant Women and New Moms

<https://mchbgrandchallenges.hrsa.gov/challenges/addressing-opioid-use-disorder-pregnant-women-and-new-moms>

The Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders - Companion Training Video from U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency 'Fentanyl: The Real Deal'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Yc9ISaSKIs>

Alberta Inner City Health and Wellness Program: Addiction Recovery and Community Health Team Program in the emergency department of inpatient setting team

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/service.aspx?id=1068151>

Axios Video: The Youngest Victims of the Opioid Epidemic

<https://youtu.be/etGdMVLWRi8>

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