

Barriers and Facilitators to Safer Supply Pilot Program Implementation in Canada

- We interviewed **program directors, clinic managers, and prescribers** from ten safer supply programs across three provinces in Canada between March 2022 to May 2023.
- **Safer supply pilot programs (SOS)** give prescribed, pharmaceutical-grade drugs to reduce use of highly toxic street drugs for people at high risk of overdose.
- This study investigated barriers and facilitators of safer supply pilot program implementation **from providers' perspectives.**

01 Caring and empathetic staff

02 Low-barrier, flexible, and client-centered care approach

03 Connection to other health and social support resources

04 Multidisciplinary teams to meet clients' different and complex needs



Program Facilitators

Creating a low barrier, flexible and client centered space was essential. Having a multidisciplinary team providing wrap around services was another key to success.

05 Ongoing evaluation to improve services

06 Development of clinical protocols to ensure consistent service to all clients

07 Knowledge-sharing about safer supply and harm reduction in the community

08 Partnership with community organizations to provide integrated and coordinated care

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Program Barriers

01 Staff shortages and burnout

02 Amount of resources needed for wrap around care

03 Limited physical space for accommodating clients in programs integrated with overdose prevention sites

04 Unclear and inconsistent policy support

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[Barriers and facilitators to safer supply pilot program implementation in Canada: a qualitative assessment of service provider perspectives](#)

Safer supply programs were harder to implement and run when policy support was unclear and inconsistent. They also faced challenges due to limited operational funds, making it difficult to provide the level of wrap-around care clients needed, and due to a lack of medication options to meet clients' diverse needs.

05 Unsustainable funds

06 Prescriber hesitancy due to perceived regulatory risks and uncertainties

07 Opposition from neighbourhood businesses towards safer supply programs

08 Limited options for prescribed alternative medications to match the street drugs

