

A CONTINUUM OF DISCONNECTION

The impacts of safer supply program closures on continuity of care, transition, and total loss of service access

In March 2025, the expiration of federal pilot funding for Safer Supply Programs (SSP) combined with restrictive provincial legislative changes to harm reduction service provision in Ontario, disrupted care for thousands of clients at risk of toxic drug poisoning.

- This study examines the impacts of these changes on client health, social stability, and overdose risk across a continuum of access.
- We conducted 30 semi-structured virtual interviews between September and November 2025 with clients who were enrolled in an SSP prior to March 31, 2025.



Continuity of Care

Clients who kept their original prescriber maintained clinical stability. However, they reported severe, ongoing anxiety and "survivor's guilt" watching peers lose access.



Transition to New Providers

Clients who switched to new prescribers reported loss of autonomy and destabilization of routines. Stating increased urine screens, supervised consumption rules, and the loss of take-home doses.



Total Loss of Access

Clients who lost both medication & integrated primary care. This group immediately returned to the toxic, unregulated fentanyl market, resulting in survival-driven criminalization and acute health harms. **100% of the study's reported overdoses occurred within this group.**



Conclusion

Not only did defunding safer supply programs reduce medication availability; it dismantled vital healthcare and community support networks, acting as a form of structural violence against people who use drugs.