

Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS)

Facts From The Federal Report of 2023-2024 by
Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre



CTS Background

Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) sites have been an essential part of Canada's healthcare system, offering harm reduction services to improve positive outcomes for people with substance use disorders (SUD). Despite evidence of effectiveness, they often face stigma and policy challenges that threatens their sustainability.

In order to address the incessant "Opioid Crisis" in Ontario from a more holistic perspective, in January 2019, the Government of Ontario replaced the former **Supervised Consumption Services and Overdose Prevention Site** model with a new **Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) program**.

The Opioid Crisis

The opioid crisis in Canada has worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic. Between April 2024 and March 2025, the City of Hamilton reported **58 opioid poisoning related emergency visits** and **9 hospitalizations per month** on average¹. The city's emergency department visit rates for unintentional poisonings doubled between 2012 and 2021, **consistently surpassing Ontario's average**².

This continued strain on public health resources underscored the pressing need for an integrated harm reduction strategy; thereby laying the groundwork for the development of the Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS). This model required strict monitoring, reporting, and audit protocols to track outcomes and ensure compliance. It maintained the core harm reduction and overdose prevention services while adding a stronger emphasis on connecting clients to treatment and rehabilitation³.

However, due to rising public concerns and political stigma, the government announced the closure of all CTS sites located within 200 meters of schools and childcare centres across Ontario effective March 2025⁴.





Hamilton's Only Consumption and Treatment Services Site

From 2019 until March 2025, Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre (HUCCHC) operated **Hamilton's only safe consumption site**, known as the **CTS program**. The program was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health. In addition to supervised consumption services, the CTS site at HUCCHC delivered an integrated suite of harm reduction supports, including the distribution of safer use supplies, wound care, and access to both internal and external referrals addressing social, mental, and physical health needs through a coordinated service framework.

A critical element of the program was the provision of drug checking services, offering an additional layer of risk mitigation for service users. In accordance with updated provincial legislation, all CTS program activities at HUCCHC were formally suspended from March 31, 2025.

Insights from the 2023–2024 Federal Report for the CTS Program by Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre

This report provides an overview of service delivery patterns and population-level outcomes associated with the Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) program operated by Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre (HUCCHC) during the 2023–2024 federal reporting period. The findings underscore the program's role in meeting the complex and intersecting needs of individuals impacted by substance use, particularly those from the marginalized communities in Hamilton.

All the results in this report are derived from the analysis of the data collected for the Federal Report of year 2023-2024 for the CTS site at HUCCHC.

Key Findings and Analysis

Client Visits

The CTS site recorded a total of 9,997 client visits, 730 of which were peer-assisted visits. There was a total of 1,109 unique clients and 306 of them were peer-assisted. Among them, 408 clients (total) and 13 peer-assisted clients accessed the CTS site for the first time.

All Visits

9,997
CLIENT VISITS

1,109
UNIQUE CLIENTS

408
FIRST TIME CLIENTS

Peer-assisted Visits

720
CLIENT VISITS

306
UNIQUE CLIENTS

13
FIRST TIME CLIENTS

Monthly Client Visits 2023-2024

● Total Visits ● Peer Assisted Visited

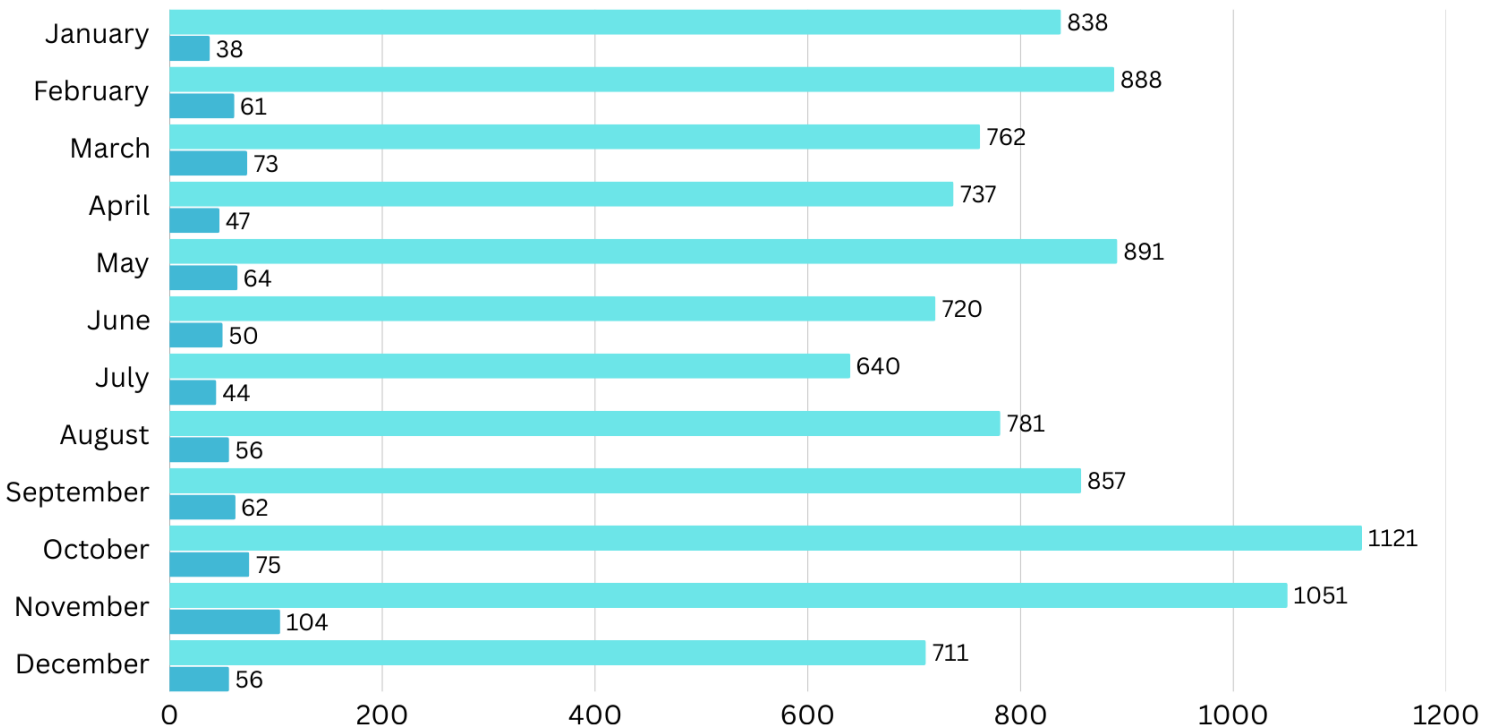


Table 1: Summary of Client Visits for CTS Programs in Ontario Anticipating Closure

Table 1 represents the client visits from March 2020 till May 2024 for all the CTS sites that closed down due to the recent legislation⁵. According to the table, there were 61,667 total client visits and 6122 unique client visits during that period at the HUCCHC CTS site⁵.

City Name: Supervised Consumption Service Site	Visits	Unique Clients	Referrals	Non-Fatal Doses
Closer Anticipated	382776	74786	202849	8471
Guelph: Guelph CHC	28099	5464	4238	198
Hamilton: Hamilton Urban Core CHC	61667	6122	16633	400
Kitchener: Supervised Consumption Site - Kitchener/Waterloo	44731	9540	23218	935
Ottawa: Somerset West Community Centre	43800	6329	99184	1728
Thunder Bay: PATH525 (NorWest CHC)	31541	8466	14045	372
Toronto: Kensington Market Overdose Prevention Service (St. Stephen's)	14145	3705	8795	205
Toronto: Parkdale Queen West CHC (Queen West Site)	19663	5379	10905	741
Toronto: Regent Park CHC Consumption & Treatment Service	22960	6529	11740	382
Toronto: South Riverdale CHC	45078	6139	9146	1032
Toronto: The Works	71092	17113	4945	2478

Source: Centre on Drug Policy Evaluation. *Supervised Consumption Services in Toronto: Evidence and Recommendations (Toronto, November 2024)*⁵.

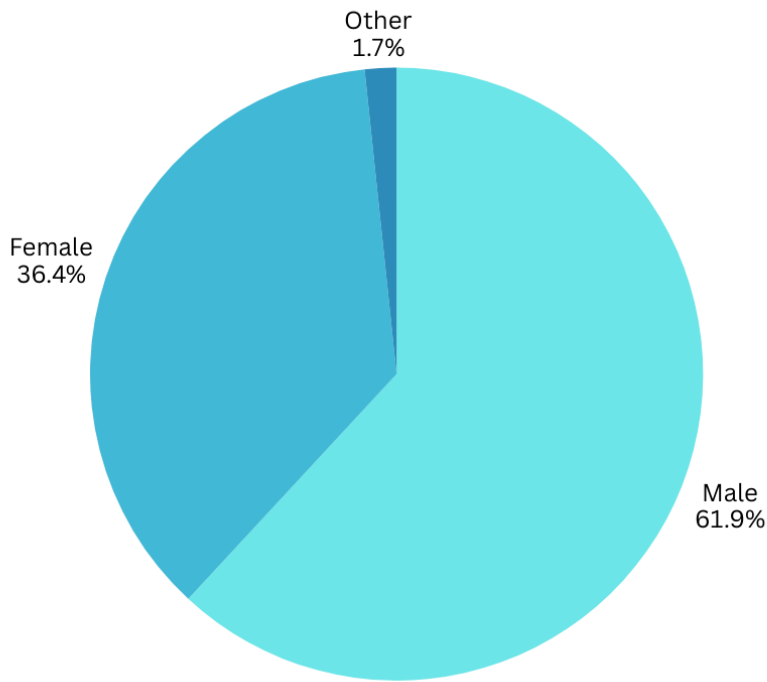
It is evident that among the ten listed sites in Table 1, HUCCHC site had the second highest number of client visits which comprised **16.11%** of all the total visits. However, the number of unique clients was comparatively lower, indicating that a substantial portion of individuals accessed the service on a recurring basis.

Gender Distribution

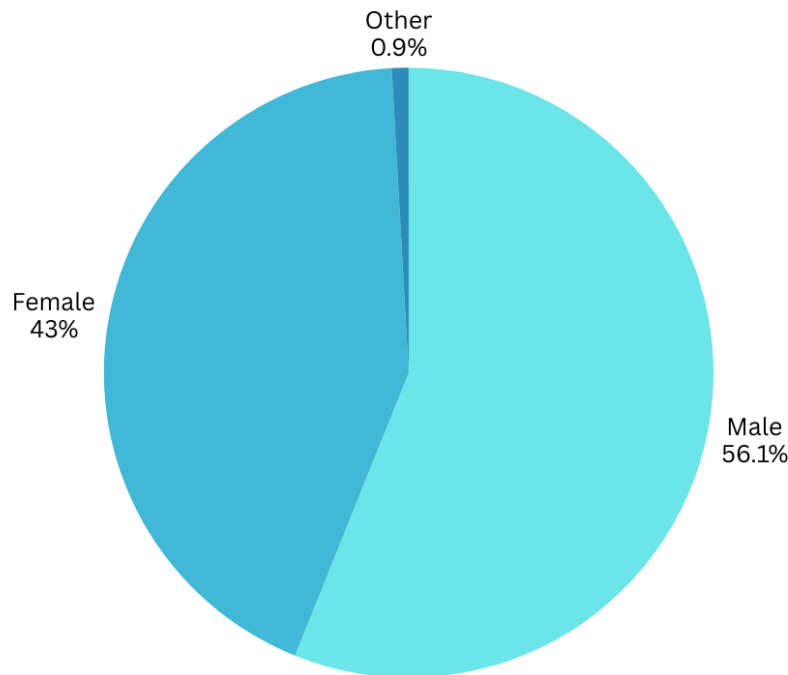
Clients accessing CTS services self-identified as male, female, or other gender. The accompanying pie charts illustrate the distribution of total and peer-assisted visits by reported gender.

The majority of clients identified as male, while the number of female clients was approximately half that of male clients. Only a small proportion of clients, 1.7% (All visits) and 0.89% (Peer assisted) self-identified as Other Gender.

Gender Distribution Total Visits



Gender Distribution Peer Assisted Visits



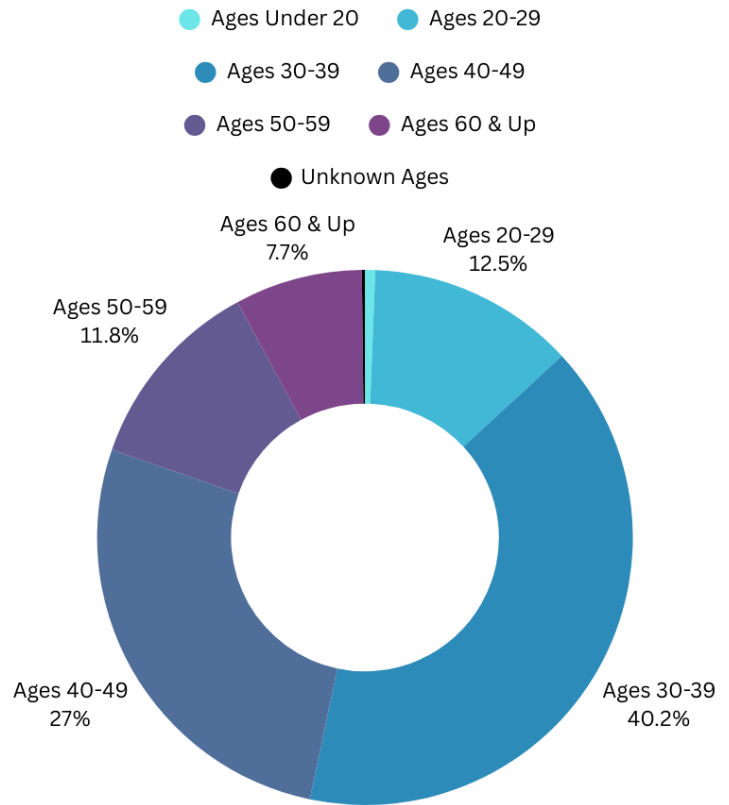
Age Distribution

The majority of clients accessing CTS services were **between 30 and 49 years** of age.

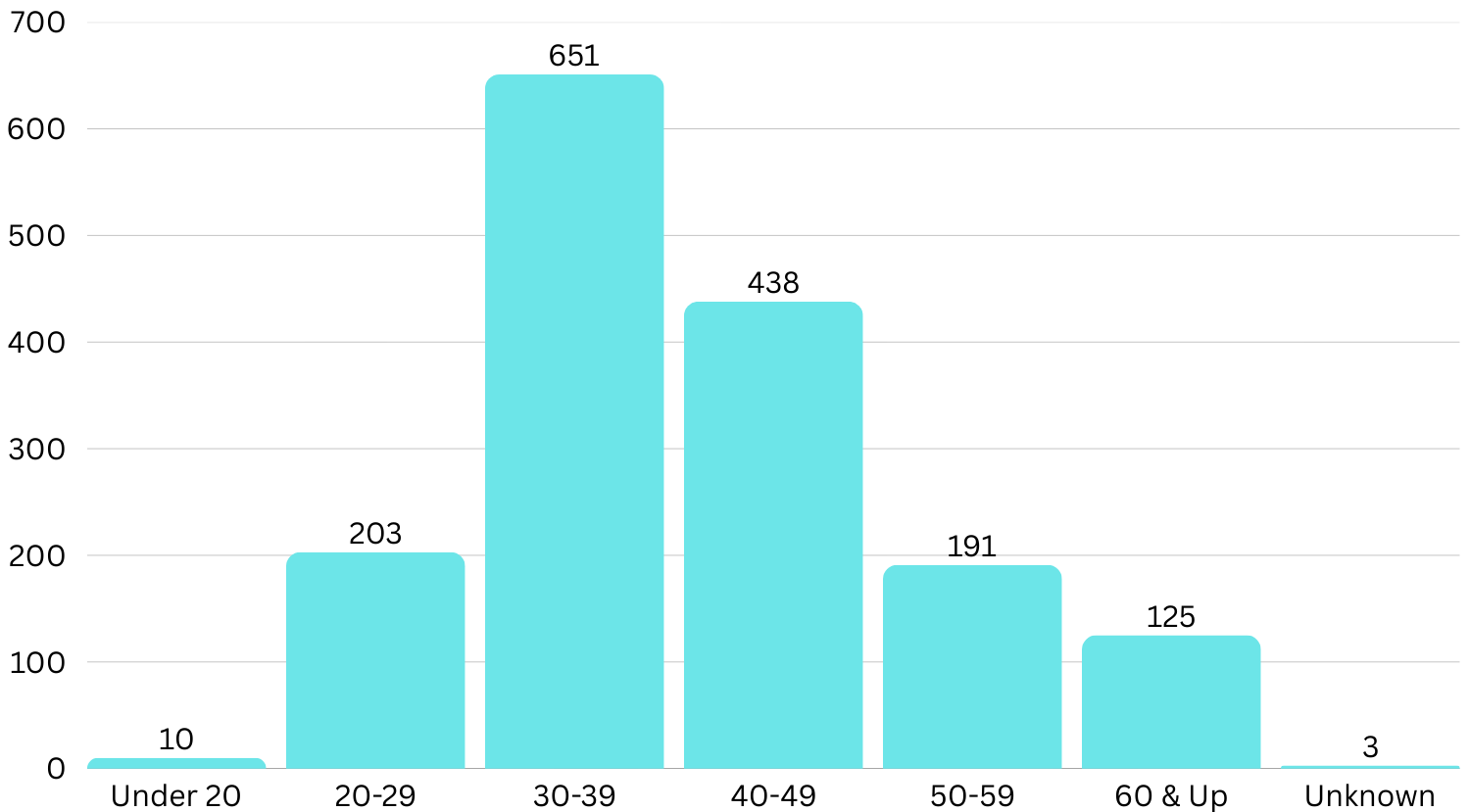
Individuals aged 30–39 recorded between 32 and 122 visits per month, while those aged 40–49 had between 21 and 78 visits per month throughout the 2023–2024 federal reporting year.

Age Group	Max Visits/ Month	Min Visits/ Month
30-39	122	32
40-49	78	20

Age Distribution in Percentage 2023-2024



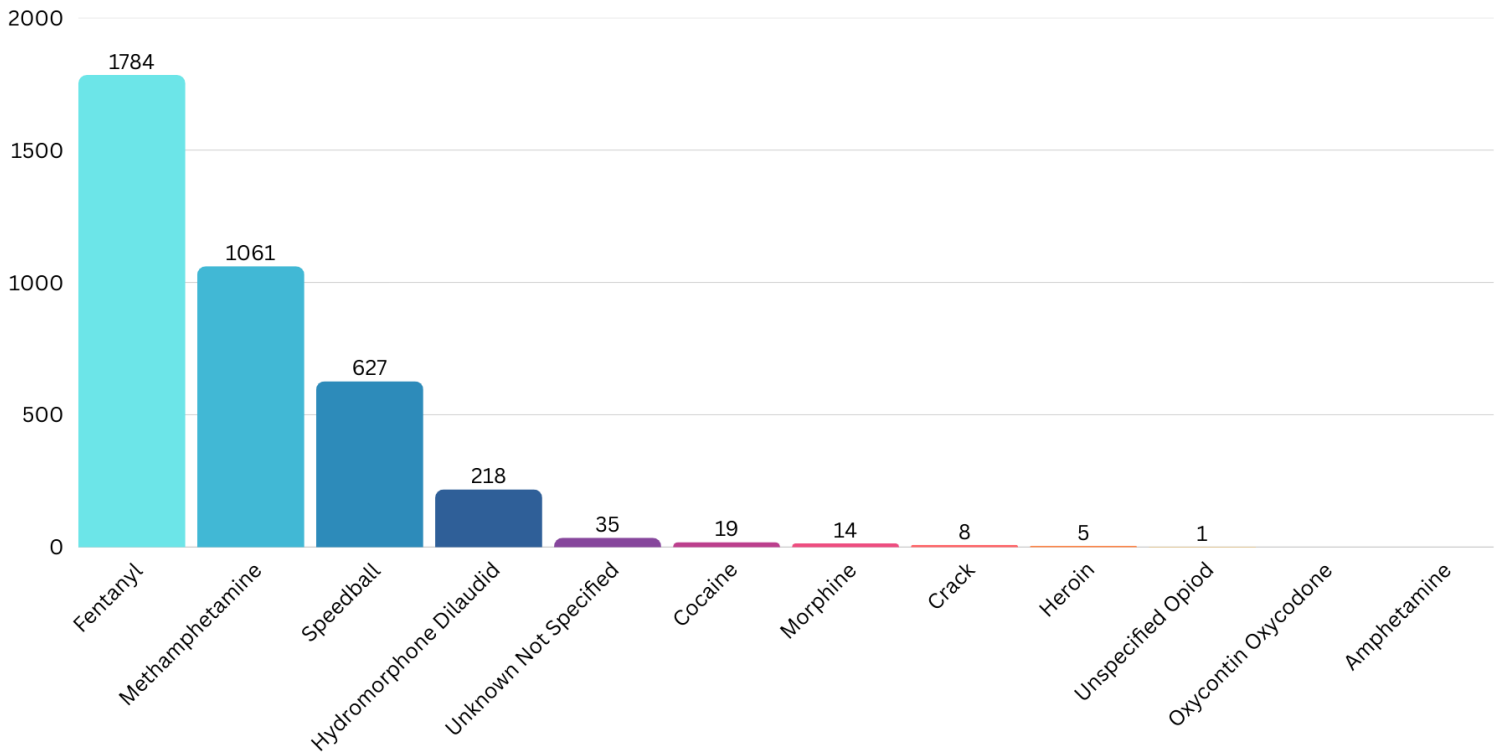
Age Distribution of Clients 2023-2024



Utilized Substance Types

According to the 2023–2024 federal report, clients reported using a range of substances, including cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, amphetamine, heroin, fentanyl, oxycontin/oxycodone, morphine, hydromorphone/Dilaudid, unspecified opioids, speedball, other substances, and substances labeled as unknown or not specified. The **most used substance was fentanyl**, followed by methamphetamine, and the **least consumed substance was oxycodone**.

Most Consumed Substances 2023-2024

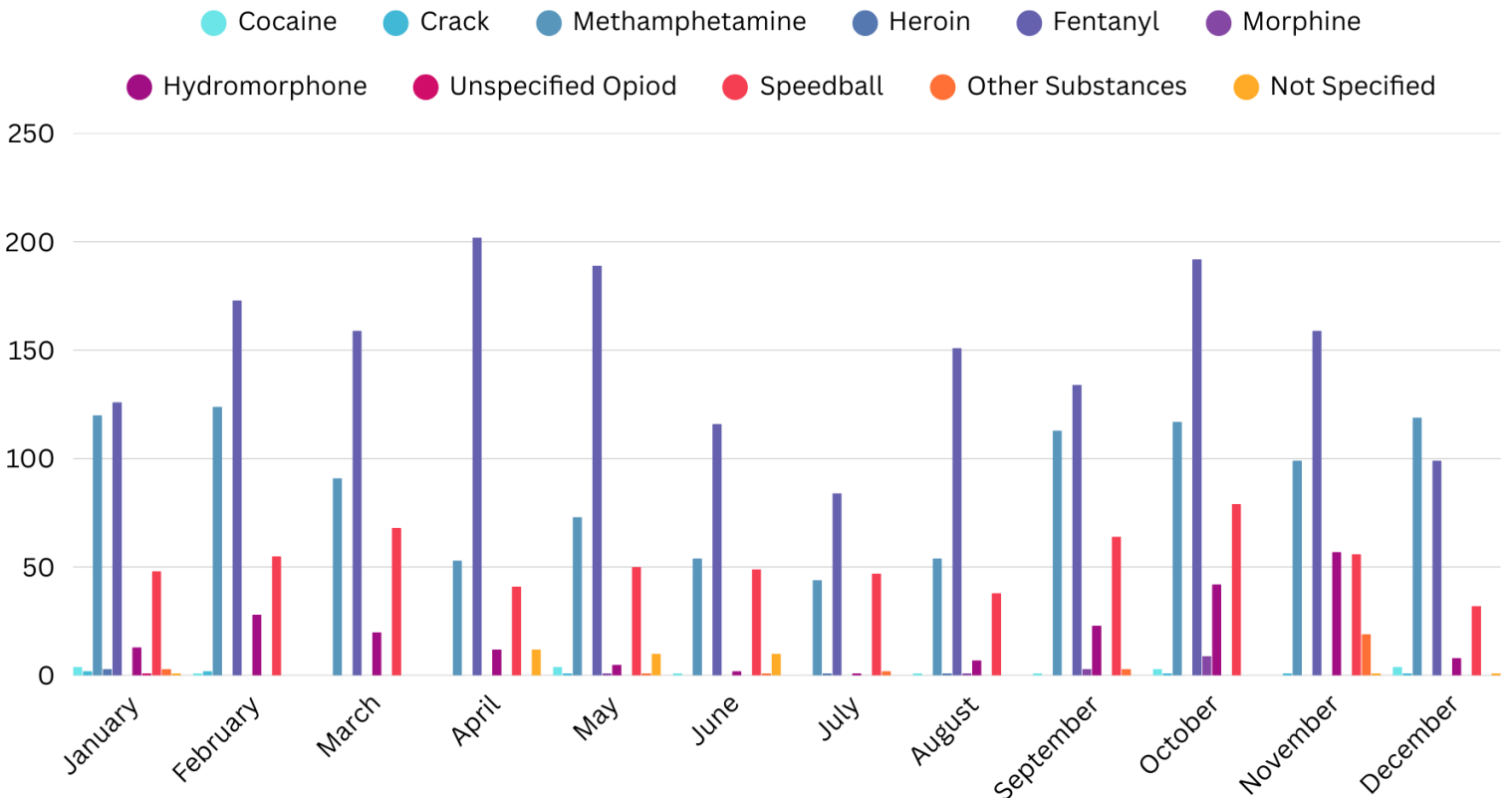




Utilization Pattern

All around the year, fentanyl was the most prevalent substance of choice. Additionally, the highest use of fentanyl occurred during the months of April, May, October (2023) and February (2024) and dropped significantly during July and December of 2023. Methamphetamine usage also soared after August 2023 and remained high for the rest of the year. All other substances showed a steady consumption pattern.

Monthly Utilization Pattern 2023-2024

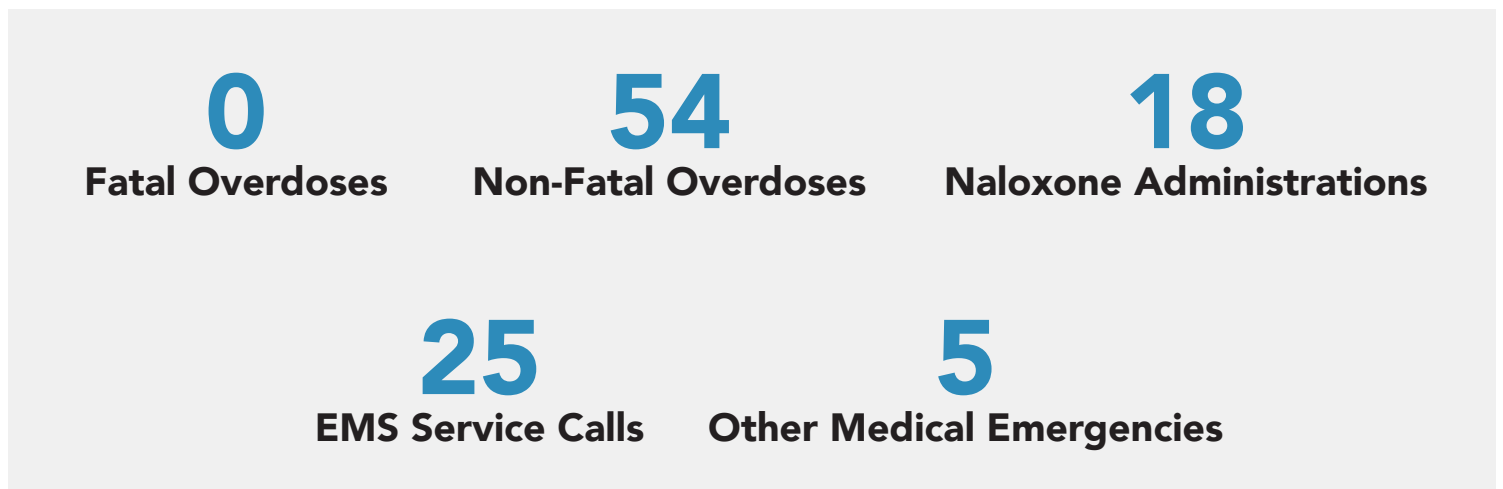




Overdose Events & Other Emergencies

According to the federal report data, all reported overdose events at the CTS site were non-fatal. Zero fatal overdoses and 54 non-fatal overdoses were recorded.

A total of 18 overdose events required naloxone administration. In terms of emergency response, a total of 25 EMS service calls and 5 other calls were made for emergencies.

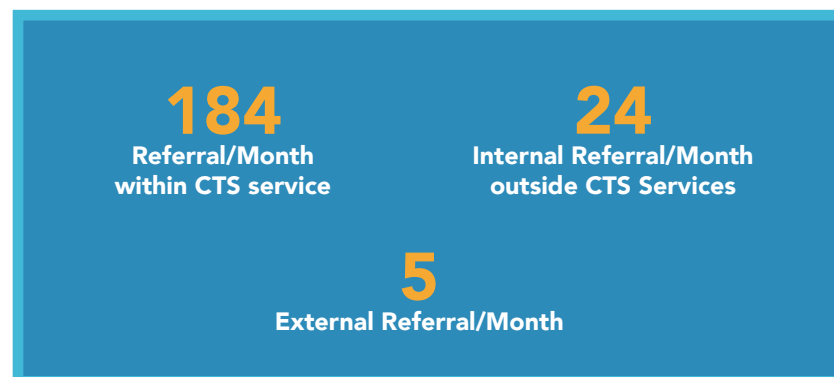


From March 2020 to May 2024, there were a total 400 non-fatal overdose events. The overdose count remained significantly low considering the large number of clients served⁵.

Internal and External Referrals

For the federal year of 2023-2024 a total of 2,351 referrals were made. Most of these referrals were within the CTS program, followed by internal referrals that were outside the CTS.

From March 2020 to May 2024, a total of 16,633 referrals were made to assure wraparound services providing holistic care to the clients⁵.



Summary of Program Strength

- The CTS program at HUCCHC recorded 9,997 visits during the 2023–2024 federal year, serving 1,109 unique clients, including 408 new clients.
- 0 fatal and 54 non-fatal overdoses occurred, among which 18 non-fatal overdoses required Naloxone administration, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in preventing fatality.
- The majority of the client population were males aged between 30 and 49 years.
- Fentanyl was the most used substance.
- The program offered a comprehensive, integrated model of care, providing supervised consumption alongside wrap-around supports such as wound care, safer use supplies, referrals to primary care, and social services.
- The high number of internal referrals (average 184 per month) highlights strong client engagement with on-site services and the effectiveness of a low-barrier, collaborative approach in meeting the needs of people who use drugs.



Current Advancements and Future Opportunities

- Following the unfortunate closure of the CTS program, the CTS program at HUCCHC has now transitioned into a HART Hub model, known as the Mental Health & Treatment (MHAT) Hub.
- The MHAT program is an innovative approach to provide integrated, wrap-around care for people with severe addictions and co-occurring mental illness.
- As part of the MHAT program, we are offering wrap-around supports like laundry, showers, food, collective kitchen, ID clinic, needle drop-off, primary care, mental health and addiction care, case management, life skills and social reintegration supports.
- We are also providing bed-based intensive addiction treatment and supportive recovery services through the Residential Treatment and Recovery Program as part of the MHAT program.
- Looking ahead, we are committed to exploring sustainable opportunities and innovative models of care to ensure long-term stability and growth of our clients.



Acknowledgements

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the staff and leadership of Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre (HUCCHC) for their unwavering dedication to harm reduction and community health.

We also thank and acknowledge our clients of the CTS site, whose engagement and experiences have informed us and contributed to shaping future care models.

Funding

The CTS program at Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre (HUCCHC) was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health. However, the views expressed in this report are solely those of the authors. This report was prepared independently by HUCCHC.

Suggested Citation

Ezepue, S. & Noor, N. (2026). Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS): Facts from the federal report of 2023-2024 by Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre. December 2025.

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