The Cannabis Knowledge Exchange Hub – Lessons for Dissemination

May 5, 2021
CAMH Land Acknowledgement

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is situated on lands that have been occupied by First Nations for millennia; lands rich in civilizations with knowledge of medicine, architecture, technology and extensive trade routes throughout the Americas. The site of CAMH appears in colonial records as the council grounds of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Toronto is now home to a vast diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis who enrich this city.

CAMH is committed to reconciliation. We will honour the land through programs and places that reflect and respect its heritage. We will embrace the healing traditions of the Ancestors and weave them into our caring practices. We will create new relationships and partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis—share the land and protect it for future generations.

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About CAMH

- Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital and one of the world's leading research centres in its field.

- Fully affiliated with the University of Toronto and is a Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization Collaborating Centre.

- Provides clinical care to more than 34,000 patients each year, conducts groundbreaking research, provides expert training to health care professionals, develops innovative health promotion and prevention strategies, and advocates on public policy issues.
AGENDA

1. Cannabis Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hub: Goals and Background
2. Activities and Knowledge Products
3. The Hub as an Innovative Model for Stakeholder Engagement
4. Lessons Learned and Looking Ahead
5. Q & A
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Cannabis KE Hub: Goals and Background
Why the need for the Cannabis KE Hub?

- Legalization of cannabis in Canada launched in October 2018 – federal legalization with provinces and territories able to design their own policy and regulatory frameworks as well.

- Legalization poses a challenge to service providers on how best to respond across sectors and across the continuum of care.

- To our knowledge, previously no collaborative network specific to cannabis existed that connects sectors like public health, primary care, mental health and addictions, and education.
Goal and objectives of the Hub

Goal:
To connect stakeholders from multiple sectors with each other and with relevant, actionable evidence on issues related to the non-medical use of cannabis, and across the continuum of care, from promotion and prevention to harm reduction, treatment, and recovery.

Objectives:
1. Facilitate alignment and cross-sectoral collaborations with service providers from across sectors and the continuum of care in Canada.
2. Facilitate service provider access to and use of evidence across the province, sector, and continuum of care.
3. Facilitate practice-to-policy communication mechanisms to align system efforts at the policy, planning, and practice levels.
Target audiences

Ontario stakeholders working across the continuum of care from diverse sectors:

- Mental health and addictions
- Primary care
- Public health
- Education
Project focus

**Year 1:** General evidence needs of service providers supporting a broad population of Canadians.

**Years 2 and 3:** Evidence needs of service providers working with communities that are more vulnerable to the potential harms of non-medical cannabis use, including:

- Youth
- Socio-economically marginalized communities such as racialized populations, Indigenous communities, and people living with mental health and/or substance use issues
Enhance cross-sectoral collaboration among stakeholders who are working to address key cannabis-related issues.

Increase awareness and knowledge on non-medical use of cannabis and related issues.

Enhance access to tailored, evidence-based knowledge products and learning opportunities for service providers on key cannabis issues.

Increase capacity for service providers to disseminate knowledge and learnings on cannabis issues to their end users.

Enhance the use of evidence-informed information on cannabis to change policies, programs, and practice.

Enhance access to quality, evidence-informed health promotion, prevention, treatment, and harm reduction programs and services.
Activities and Knowledge Products
The **Cannabis Knowledge Exchange Hub** at CAMH is funded by Health Canada’s Substance Use and Addictions Program.

A cross-sectoral **Champions Circle** including representatives from key sectors informs and supports the Hub.

**What we do**

- Develop knowledge products.
- Support knowledge exchange and sharing.
- Maintain a curated and searchable repository of current evidence-based resources.
Partnerships and Collaborations

- Government
- Local Health Integration Networks
- National Mental Health and Addictions Organizations

EENet
- Persons with lived experience
- EENet Advisory Committee
- Researchers

Cannabis Knowledge Exchange Hub

Cross-sectoral Champions Circle
Key activities

- Established the **Champions Circle** to inform and support the Hub.

- Created a project **website**; establishing an **online community of interest**; hosting of knowledge exchange events including **webinars** and an **annual knowledge exchange forum**.

- Supporting up to two **cross-sectoral collaborations** a year, around the co-development of a specific knowledge product or activity.

- **Consulting with CAMH researchers, clinicians, and people with lived/living experience**, as experiential knowledge provides another critical form of evidence.

- Curating and developing **knowledge products** that respond to the needs of the Hub and secondary audiences.
Key activities continued

- **Sharing of learnings and knowledge products with stakeholders**, using a variety of communication channels, at provincial and national levels.

- Convening **annual practice-to-policy dialogues** on cannabis with provincial and national policymakers, system planners, service providers, and researchers.

- **Developing policy briefs** for policymakers that can be used at municipal, provincial, and national levels, in collaboration with CAMH policy experts.

- Convening relevant stakeholders and national partners in an **end-of-grant dialogue** to share knowledge and learnings across jurisdictions in Canada.
Knowledge products (February 2021)

### Products By Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>5</td>
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### # of Products by Language

- **English Only**: 12
- **French Only**: 15
- **Both English and French**: 3

### Main Topics

- **Youth**: 14
- **Legislation**: 5
- **Driving**: 4
- **Diversity/Inclusion**: 3
- **Francophone Population**: 2
- **Use**: 1
- **Drug Interactions**: 1
- **Pregnancy**: 1
- **Seniors**: 1
- **Sex and Gender**: 1
- **Education Impact**: 1
- **Mental Health**: 1

Colors:
- English Only
- French Only
- Both English and French
Resources with most page views:

- *What effect does cannabis have on mood and cognition in young adults?*
- *Does cannabis use affect success in quitting tobacco smoking?*
- *Youth cannabis use following legalization*

Top theme:

- *Youth and cannabis use*
Evidence brief: Community responses to cannabis legalization in Canada: A qualitative study

Published: Nov 13, 2020
Practice-to-policy dialogues

   - Co-moderated discussion to explore the impacts of legalization on the regulated and unregulated cannabis markets.
   - Participants were from organizations at national, provincial, and municipal levels (e.g., Mental Health Commission of Canada, Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, provincial cannabis distributors in Ontario and other jurisdictions, local public health units in Ontario).

2. Connecting policy and practice: A dialogue on cannabis markets and youth access post legalization (September 22, 2020)
   - Co-designed and co-moderated with CAMH Youth Engagement Initiative.
   - Expanded participants to include young people and representation from the territories.

TBD in September/October 2021 – cannabis and harm reduction!
Cannabis Knowledge Exchange Forum 2021: A Health Equity Lens on Youth and Cannabis Use

- Hosted by CAMH in partnership with MHCC and the McCain Centre

- Overarching Themes
  - Cannabis use among diverse populations
  - Building resilience and reducing harm
  - Youth perceptions on cannabis

- 26 speakers including 7 youth speakers
- 2 plenary sessions; 11 breakout sessions; English and French
Virtual forum platform

CANNABIS KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE FORUM
FORUM D’ÉCHANGE DES CONNAISSANCES SUR LE CANNABIS

Please join us for our last session of the day/Please join us for our last session of the day and closing remarks in 10 minutes/Rejoignez-nous dans 10 minutes pour l’allocation de clôture.
Cannabis Knowledge Exchange Forum 2021

565 Registrants. 443 English, 51 French, 71 did not specify language; 280 attendees

LOCATION OF REGISTRANTS (N = 550)

SECTOR OF REGISTRANTS (N = 550)

- Community MHA: 141
- Hospital MHA: 76
- Child & Youth: 57
- Did not specify: 52
- Other: 50
- Education: 43
- Primary Care: 28
- Public Health: 25
- Research/Academia: 21
- FN, Inuit, Métis Org: 21
- Government: 18
- Justice: 6
- Housing: 6
- Peer Support: 3
- Employment: 3

ON: 83%
QC: 5%
NL: 4%
NB: 3%
NS: 3%
AB: 3%
Other: 3%
Dissemination

Promotion of the website

- EENet co-creates tailored communications with Champions to promote the website to target stakeholders
- Partner websites
- Partner social media
- Partner newsletters

Broad dissemination

- EENet.ca, EENetConnect.ca
- Posting online to newsroom on camh.ca (via CAMH Public Affairs)
- Twitter (CAMH Twitter feed; EENet Twitter feed)
- Newsletters (EENet newsletter)
Dissemination continued

Targeted outreach and education to service providers, public health practitioners, and professional regulatory bodies

- Newsletters for professional organizations
- Template website updates
- Blog posts and articles

Conference participation

- Distribution of print materials at EENet/PSSP events and conference exhibit tables
- Canadian Public Health Association -- Cannabis and Public Health Forum (2019)
- In-person and virtual forums
- Online discussion forum: Hosted on EENet Connect platform and moderated by the project team, this online space enables stakeholders to connect and post questions and resources. A small network of researchers is engaged to help respond to evidence requests.
The Hub as an Innovative Model for Stakeholder Engagement
A researcher’s perspective

- Increasing recognition of the importance of integrated knowledge translation, especially from funders

- Challenge for researchers to get access to these stakeholders and, in particular, a wide variety of stakeholders

- Build trusting relationships and expand networks

- Removes disconnect between researchers and stakeholders
  - Identify current gaps in knowledge/priorities for future research
  - Consultation on existing research
  - Improvements in translation and dissemination of key findings
Lessons Learned and Looking Ahead
Future topics of interest

- Continued focus on youth
- Additional specific populations – e.g., older adults, pregnant women
- Benefits of non-medical cannabis use
- Cannabis use and access during COVID-19 pandemic
- Cannabis as a substitution for alcohol/other substances – and other forms of harm reduction
Lessons learned and looking ahead

- How could the Hub model could be transferred to other contexts?

- How do we reach more people outside of Ontario?

- Are we reaching people from other sectors such as those in justice, housing, and peer support sectors?
Q & A
Thank You