

5 Ways to Take Action for

# SAFER SUPPLY



Proven to reduce overdose deaths! Improves health outcomes

Prevents poisoning and unexpected ailments!

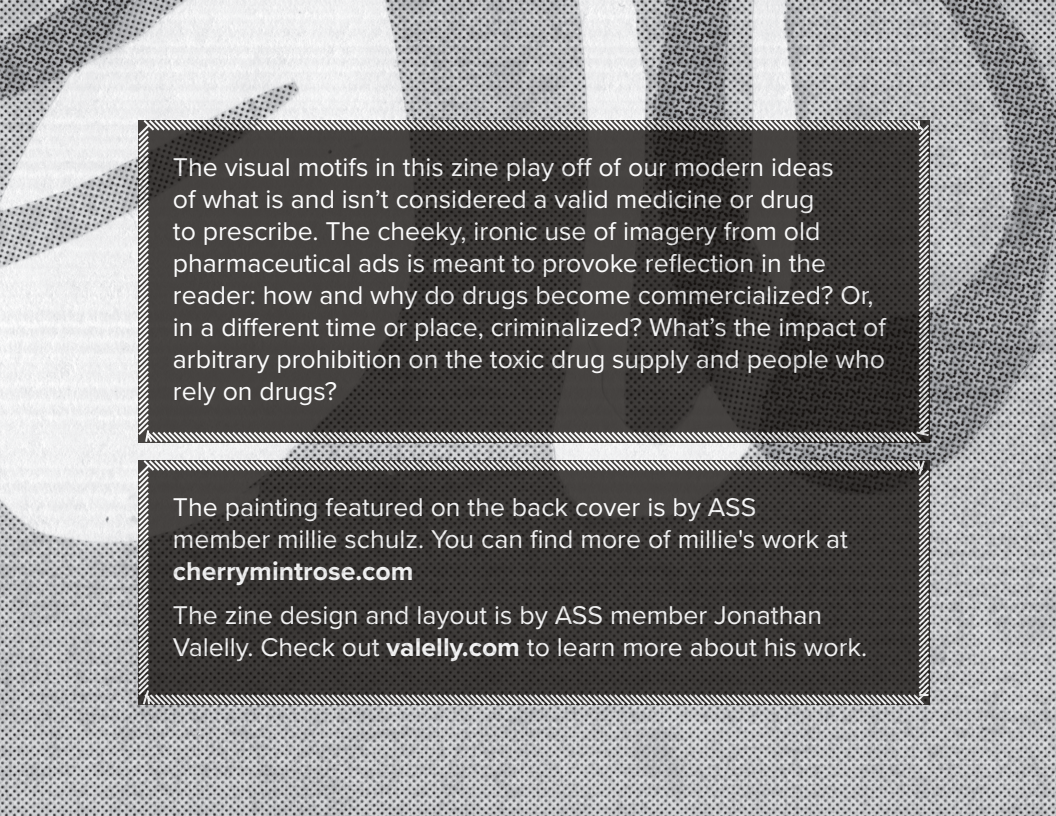
This zine was produced collaboratively by Action for Safer Supply (ASS), an advisory group of the National Safer Supply Community of Practice.

All members of this group brought lived expertise to the course of its work, which ran from 2022-2024.

A special thanks from all of us to Alex Holtom, the coordinator for the working group. Without Alex's steadfast and thoughtful hard work, the success of the group would have been unimaginable.

This zine is copyleft, meaning you are encouraged to reproduce it in part or in full. For instructions on how to access the PDF and/or print your own copies, see the last two pages.

can. Write  
602, Bristol-

The background of the entire page is a halftone dot pattern. In the center, there is a faint, larger-scale halftone image of a hand holding a pill bottle. The hand is on the left, and the bottle is on the right. The bottle has a label with some illegible text and a logo. The overall aesthetic is that of a vintage or underground publication.

The visual motifs in this zine play off of our modern ideas of what is and isn't considered a valid medicine or drug to prescribe. The cheeky, ironic use of imagery from old pharmaceutical ads is meant to provoke reflection in the reader: how and why do drugs become commercialized? Or, in a different time or place, criminalized? What's the impact of arbitrary prohibition on the toxic drug supply and people who rely on drugs?

The painting featured on the back cover is by ASS member millie schulz. You can find more of millie's work at **[cherrymintrose.com](http://cherrymintrose.com)**

The zine design and layout is by ASS member Jonathan Valelly. Check out **[valelly.com](http://valelly.com)** to learn more about his work.

# 1

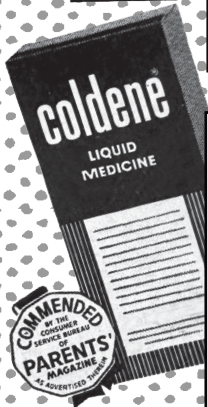
## ***Learn about safer supply***

The first step is to get informed! Here are some key points to keep in mind when speaking up and taking action for safe supply.

### ***What is safer supply?***

Safer supply is a practical strategy for addressing the ongoing toxic drug overdose crisis.

The idea is to provide a “safer supply” to people who use drugs by prescribing people medications similar to the substances they rely on. That way, substances come from a trusted source rather than the highly toxic street supply.



## ***Why prescribe safer drugs?***

Safer supply gives people a new, safer option to get substances.

Drugs bought on the street today are unpredictable, unregulated, and dangerous. Drugs said to be one thing often have hidden ingredients, contaminants and fillers. These can lead to nasty side effects, overdose and death.

PWUD and healthcare providers have been doing some form of safe supply for decades. Over time this activism has led to recent legal permissions for formal safer supply programs, plus a growing network of providers.

However, these advancements are at risk. Now is the time to work together in defending and expanding safer supply in Canada!

***(PWUD = People Who Use Drugs)***

## ***What is the goal?***

The goals of safer supply are to:

- Reduce overdose risk and prevent overdose deaths
- Reduce the harms caused by the toxic supply of drugs on the streets
- End the criminalization of drugs and people who use them.
- Be a tool in the larger fight against intersecting oppressions that impact PWUD, such as racism, colonialism, classism, queerphobia, police brutality, incarceration, the housing crisis, physical abuse, social isolation, and beyond
- Secure personal autonomy, agency, empowerment, self determination and access to harm reduction for people who use drugs
- Improve the health, stability, and quality of life of PWUD.

*Safer supply works from a harm reduction approach. Harm reduction movements emphasize leadership, knowledge and needs and of people who use drugs (PWUD) above all. They aim to build better, more accessible, less stigmatizing services for PWUD right here, right now.*



# 2

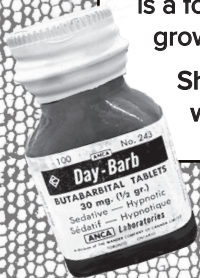
**Access safer supply,  
spread the word!**



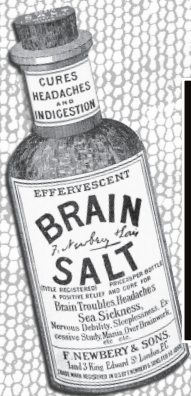
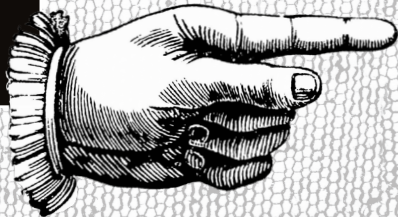
Demand access to safer supply for yourself and/or others. Learn if you are eligible or educate people you know about accessing safer drugs.

Sharing key resources and your lived expertise in your local community is a form of advocacy for safer supply everywhere, strengthening a growing network of providers, patients and activists.

Share these resources with medical professionals to equip them with the information they need to go ahead with prescribing.



Brush up, or share this portable library of resources with medical professionals to equip them with the information they need to go ahead with prescribing.

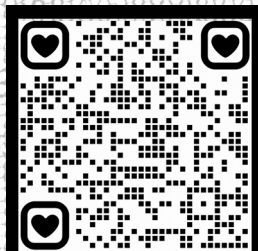


Scan a QR code using your phone camera. They each link to a PDF file. Or check out the online resource library at [www.nss-aps.ca/resources](http://www.nss-aps.ca/resources)

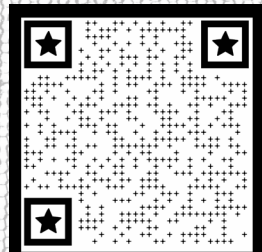




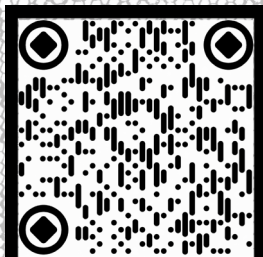
**Safer Supply for  
Healthcare Providers**



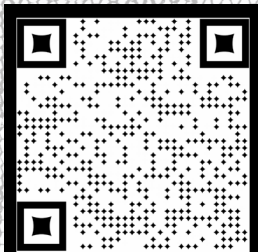
**National  
Advocacy Toolkit**



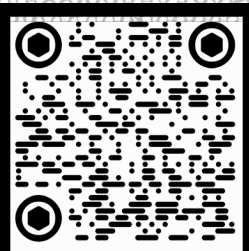
**Resource  
List**



**Conceptualizing  
Safer Supply**



**Frequently Asked  
Questions**



**Emerging  
Evidence Brief**

# 3

## Call and write to officials at every level

It's also important to advocate for safer supply on the policy level. **Local governments** such as city council, mayor's office and other officials often help decide where and how safer supply and other harm reduction programs operate. Find out the status of safer supply in your community.



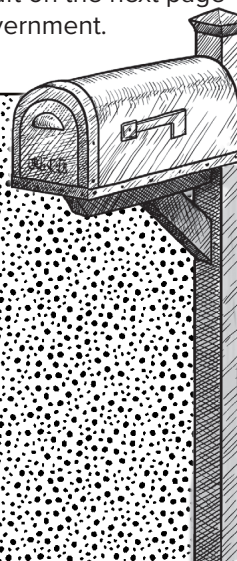
**Provincial or territorial governments** often have more power over how these programs are permitted, rolled out, funded and developed as they create and pass the legislation that gets carried out by the Ministry of Health.

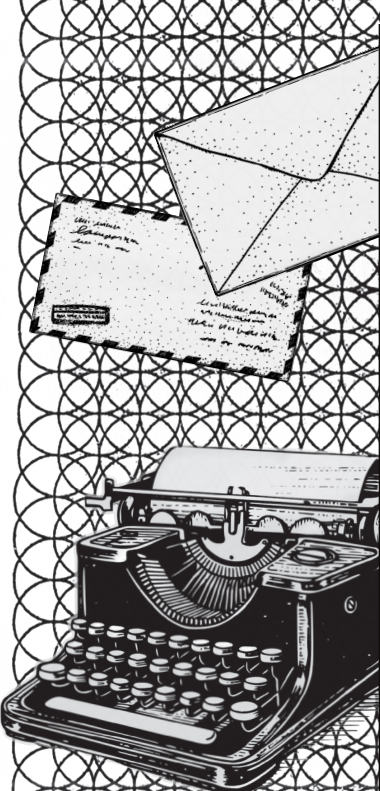


**Federal funding** has played a major role in getting safer supply projects off the ground at sites across Canada. Even though these programs have proven to be very successful at reducing overdose deaths and improving the health of people who access them, these essential funding contracts have not been renewed and funding to most sites will end completely in 2024. ***This is unacceptable.*** Use the addresses below. Adapt the draft on the next page as a starting point for your own letter to the federal government. Make it personal and direct. Politicians do read these!

**The Honourable Mark Holland**  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

**The Honourable Ya'ara Saks**  
Minister of Addiction & Mental Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6





[Date]

Dear [name of Federal Official].

I'm writing to urge you and your Ministry to immediately extend and prioritize funding for prescribed safer supply programs in Canada.

As you know, federal support for many safer supply programs is at its end, pushing these crucial programs to the brink of closing — or worse, beyond it. Losing what we have built with safer supply would be a tragic setback in the long fight against the deadly overdose crisis. Prescribed drugs has given a future to many Canadians who are otherwise at extra high risk of dying.

[Explain your relationship to safer supply - e.g. "I myself could am at risk of dying" or "I have lost friends and loved ones to drug poisoning". Whatever is true and important for you to share about this issue].

Cutting off funding for this life saving practice will inevitably force people back to the toxic street drug supply. Must not abandon people who need safer supply, especially now that many have experienced major positive changes in [their/our] health, safety and wellbeing. Why jeopardize this healing and growth and push people back to risking their lives?

I can attest that safer supply programs have already saved lives, and I insist once more that we need the government's support. Right now is a chance for Canada to show leadership. Please commit to ongoing, sustainable funding for this proven and effective response to the brutal overdose crisis.

Thank you,  
[Your name]  
[Where you live]



# 4

## ***Join the fight!***

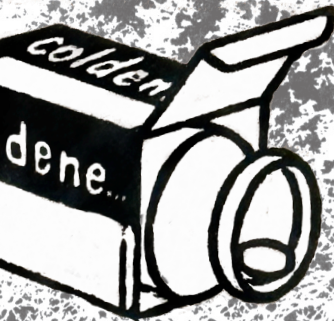
It's impossible to describe the unique power and awesome momentum sparked every time people who use drugs work together for change. Luckily, you can feel it for yourself by getting involved!

Check out local activist groups, drug user unions and other grassroots groups, and get involved in the fight for safer supply. Even if you aren't sure how to would contribute, they will always be happy for more hands on deck. They may also be able to help you get access to safer prescriptions yourself.

Here is a list with some examples of such groups - they are just waiting to hear from you, so join the fight for safer supply today!

## ***British Columbia/Yukon***

- BC Coalition of Substance Users of the North (CSUN)
- Blood Ties Four Directions Centre - Whitehorse
- Drug User Liberation Front (DULF)
- Professionals for Ethical Engagement of Peers (PEEP)
- SOLID Victoria
- SUSTAIN Powell River
- Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU)
- Victoria SAFER Initiative



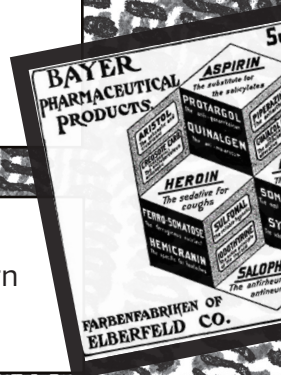
## ***Alberta/NWT***

- Alberta Alliance Who Educate and Advocate Responsibly (AAWEAR)
- Alberta Nurses' Coalition for Harm Reduction (ANCHR)
- ARCHES Lethbridge
- Street Cats YYC
- Yellowknife Women's Society

## **Ontario**

- Brantford Coalition of Substance Users of the North (CSUN)
- Ontario Network of People Who Use Drugs (ONPUD)
- Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program - Kingston
- Ontario Drug Policy Research Network (ODPRN)
- Toronto Harm Reduction Alliance (THRA)
- Toronto Overdose Prevention Society (TOPS)
- Windsor Drug User Network (WDUN)

The **Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs (CAPUD)** has a nationwide mandate. Learn more at **[capud.ca](http://capud.ca)**.





4 doctors  
commend  
patients in...



Send for samples  
and literature to



## ***Prairies***

- Manitoba Harm Reduction Network (MHRN)
- Niiyanaan Pimatishihk Miyooayaan Pilot Project
- Prairie Harm Reduction

## ***Quebec***

- L'Association Québécoise pour la promotion de la santé des personnes utilisatrices de drogues (AQPSUD)
- L'Association des intervenants en dépendance du Québec

## ***Atlantic Canada***

- Cape Breton Association of People Empowering Drug Users
- MOSH at North End Community Health Clinic
- Substance User Network of the Atlantic Region (SUNAR)
- Rural Initiative Outreach Team (RIOT) at ACNL



**5**

***Spread this zine!***

Printable and digital versions of this zine can be found at

***[www.nss-aps.ca/zine](http://www.nss-aps.ca/zine)***

Give to five of your friends, allies, peers, health providers, politicians, neighbours — whoever you want to take action for safer supply!

## How to print this zine!

Each page is 4.5" x 5.5" — in other words, one quarter of the size of a standard 8.5" x 11" sheet of copy paper.

The printable PDF is in booklet format already. It's laid out two to a page to avoid wasting paper. In other words, it will print two at a time. Five sheets of copy paper will produce two 10-page zines each.

Make sure your printer can print double-sided (aka duplex).

Select the settings "double sided," "short edge binding" and set orientation to "landscape." Print away! It might take a few tries to get the settings right.

(You may want to trim the white border before cutting your prints in half.)

Cut your prints longways down the middle to separate the two zines. You can use a guillotine, mat knife with a ruler, or other paper cutter to cut all 10 pages at a time, but be careful and go slow. *Pro tip:* If you're printing at a copy shop, the staff can do these cuts for you very cleanly and efficiently, usually for a dollar or two extra.

After cutting, you'll want to fold each zine and crease the spine in the middle. It's best to reinforce your fold using something hard like a bone folder, glass stem or even a metal butter knife or spoon.

Then, bind in the centre fold using a long-arm stapler or paperclips.

