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SUBSTANCE USE

Networking researchers, educators & care providers



aidq

# DRUG CHECKING SYMPOSIUM

Program - Montreal

February 24 at the Archives  
535 avenue Viger Est.

February 25 at the la Grande Bibliothèque de BANQ  
475 boulevard De Maisonneuve Est.

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# Welcome & Goals

## Welcome to the 2nd Drug Checking Symposium!

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) and the Drug Resource and Education (DRED) Project are thrilled to welcome you to this year's event in Montreal.

This symposium **brings together 30 incredible speakers from across Canada**, ready to share valuable insights on drug checking. Get ready for inspiring presentations, dynamic panels, interactive workshops, and meaningful discussions—both in person and online.

We've put together an exciting program, and we hope you'll leave with new knowledge, ideas, and connections to bring back to your communities. This is your event— **let's make the most of it together!**

## Goals

- **To enable learning and knowledge** exchange among people interested in drug checking across Canada;
- **To exchange and disseminate tools and resources** from across the country;
- **To create opportunities** for networking and connections;
- **To advance transformation of the National Drug Checking Working Group** into a community of practice.

# Dates and Locations

## February 24

- **Location:** From 9 AM to 5 PM (Montreal time) at the National Archives in Montreal, located at 535 Viger Avenue East, Montreal, QC, H2L 2P3.
  - **Rooms: Atrium and Auditorium.**
- **Social event:** From 5:30 PM – at **3 Brasseurs**, 1658 Saint-Denis Street, Montreal, Quebec H2X 3K6.
- **Format:** Hybrid event (in-person and online).
- **Accessibility:** Simultaneous English-French interpretation available.

## February 25

- **Location: From 9 AM to 5 PM** The Grande Bibliothèque de BAnQ, 475 De Maisonneuve Boulevard East, Montreal, QC, H2L 5C4.
  - **Rooms: M-450 and M-465.**
- **Format:** In-person only.
- **Accessibility:** Sessions in **English only.**

# Day 1: Schedule February 24

Time	Session
<b>Registration in person Room Atrium &amp; Online via ZOOM</b>	
8 - 9	<b>Arrival of participants</b>
<b>Auditorium &amp; Online Eastern time</b>	
9 - 9:25 <b>(English &amp; French)</b>	<p><b>Welcome, Acknowledgements and Introduction</b></p> <p><b>Jarred Aasen</b> (he/him), DRED Project and co-chair of the National Drug Checking Working Group (NDCWG)</p> <p><b>Doris Payer</b> (she/her), Senior Knowledge Broker and co-chair of the NDCWG, CCSA</p> <p><b>Julie-Soleil Meeson</b> (she/her), Responsable, contenus et valorisation de la pratique, Association des intervenants en dépendance, DRED Project and co-chair of the NDCWG</p> <p><b>Ali McMullin</b> (he/him), Intervenant psychosocial, Sub Check, Service de vérification des substances de PACT de rue</p> <p><b>Dr. Alexander Caudarella</b>, Chief Executive Officer, CCSA</p>
9:25-9:55 <b>(French)</b>	<p><b>Keynote speaker</b></p> <p><b>On the Road of Overdoses: A Pan-Canadian Portrait</b></p> <p><b>André-Anne Parent</b> (she/her), Université de Montréal, Professeure agrégée</p> <p>The overdose crisis is a complex issue, yet too often, efforts are made to simplify and reduce it to just a few factors: crime, mental health issues, and homelessness. However, a pan-Canadian journey through its many realities and faces, guided by Nancy Fraser's book on social justice and recognition, suggests that embracing this complexity can help foster more inclusive and just communities.</p>
9:55 - 10:15 <b>(English)</b>	<p><b>Overdose Prevention on Stolo Coast Salish Territory</b></p> <p><b>Tanis Rose Oldenburger</b> (she/her), Founder &amp; Executive Director, Mountainside Harm Reduction Society</p> <p>Founder and Executive Director of Mountainside Harm Reduction Society will share parts of her journey which led her to found a non-profit organization. Mountainside provides FTIR point-of-service drug checking utilizing a unique satellite/mobile model. As a peer-led organization Mountainside has unparalleled autonomy to serve the vast and semi-rural Fraser Salish Health Authority Region of BC.</p>
10:15 - 10:45	<b>Break - coffee and snacks</b>

# Day 1: Schedule February 24

Times	Session
<p><b>10:45 - 11:30</b> <b>(English)</b></p>	<p><b>From Samples to Signals: The Public Health Value of Drug Checking Data</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Doris Payer (she/her), Senior Knowledge Broker and co-chair of the NDCWG, CCSA</p> <p><b>Disseminating and Applying Drug Checking Data</b> <b>Karen McDonald</b> (she/her), Executive Director, Toronto's Drug Checking Service and Ontario's Drug Checking Community</p> <p>Since launching in 2019, Toronto's Drug Checking Service has been committed to returning the data they generate to the communities they serve. This commitment continues as the program scales within Ontario. This presentation will (1) review the program's strategies to disseminate timely and accessible data and (2) describe how various groups outside of the harm reduction community are benefiting from the program's findings, including public health units, policy makers, forensic science and toxicology laboratories, coroners, clinicians, and first responders.</p> <p><b>The Reach of British Columbia's Drug Checking Data</b> <b>Jen Angelucci</b> (she/her), Drug Checking Research Data Coordinator, British Columbia Centre on Substance Use</p> <p>Answering questions about who is using data collected from drug checking services in BC, how they are using it, and exploring potential impacts.</p> <p><b>Monitoring of New and Emerging Substances at the National Level</b> <b>Colin Steensma</b> (he/him), Senior Epidemiologist, Office of Drug Research and Surveillance, Health Canada</p> <p>In addition to drug checking, there are a number of sources of data which can inform public health practitioners on the ever-evolving landscape of psychoactive substance use in Canada. The presentation will provide a brief overview of two areas where the Office of Drug Research and Surveillance at Health Canada is working with partners to build this portrait: the Canadian Drug and Substance Watch, as well as monitoring of self-reported drug use in Supervised Consumption Sites.</p>

# Day 1: Schedule February 24

Times	Session
<p><b>11:30-11:50</b> <b>(English)</b></p>	<p><b>Informed Choices, Safer Communities: Spectrum Drug Checking in Alberta</b>  <b>Kayla Halliday</b> (she/her), Co-Manager of Harm Reduction and Program Development &amp; <b>Douglas Rusk</b> (he/they), Co-Manager of Harm Reduction and Program Development, Spectrum Drug Testing</p> <p>The Queer and Trans Health Collective will share the grassroots approach they took to generate Alberta's first legal drug checking program, Spectrum, with an emphasis on key takeaways learned from community based research and our focus on creating equitable access to support for marginalized communities. Join us as we share about the Alberta context of harm reduction, survival strategies for antagonistic government, considerations around the risk of sharing data on marginalized populations, and our top 3 insights from the last 2 years of operations that could support any grassroots drug checking effort in Canada!</p>
<p><b>11:50-2:20</b></p>	<p><b>Lunch will be served in the Atrium</b></p>
<p><b>1:20 - 2:25</b> <b>(French)</b></p>	<p><b>Overview of Substances in Quebec: Regional Variations and Trends</b>  <b>Moderator : Justine Bizier</b> (she/they), Chargée de projet, Spectre de rue, Montréal  <b>Sandrine Belley</b> (she/they), Intervenante en vérification de substance, Spectre de rue, Montréal -  <b>Jean-Philippe Bergeron</b> (he/him), Analyste-chargé de projet, Dopamine, Montréal, <b>Rose Brisebois</b> (she/her), Intervenante en milieux festifs, BRAS, Outaouais - <b>Mélissa Laporte</b> (she/her), Intervenante en réduction des méfaits, CIPTO - Centre d'intervention et de prévention en toxicomanie de l'Outaouais - <b>Mathilde Robichaud</b> (she/her), Intervenante psychosociale et <b>Samuel Généreux</b>, Nomade de Oasis Unité Mobile D'Intervention, Laval - <b>Marguerite Dufault</b> (she/her), Intervenante au service de vérification de substance, Travail de rue de Chicoutimi, Saguenay</p> <p>This presentation provides an overview of the substances most frequently tested by six drug checking services in Quebec, covering the regions of Montreal, Laval, Outaouais, and Chicoutimi. We will explore local market variations, common substances, and the specific characteristics of each regional service.</p>



# Day 1: Schedule February 24

Times	Session
<p><b>2:25 - 2:50</b> <b>(English)</b></p>	<p><b>Building Drug Checking Systems in Ontario</b>  <b>Karen McDonald</b> (she/her), Executive Director, Toronto's Drug Checking Service and Ontario's Drug Checking Community - <b>Hayley Thompson</b> (she/her), Managing Director, Toronto's Drug Checking Service and Ontario's Drug Checking Community</p> <p>Despite incredibly limited provincial support, Toronto's Drug Checking Service has scaled to become Ontario's Drug Checking Community. We've done so by building systems that have grown our program from five members in Toronto in 2019 to over 20 members throughout the province by 2025. During this presentation, we'll describe our program and the significant political and operational barriers we're facing, as well as showcase how we've streamlined exemptions and data collection and management and are supporting the use of several onsite drug checking technologies in our province.</p>
<p><b>2:50 - 3:20</b></p>	<p><b>Break - Coffee and snacks</b></p>
<p><b>3:20 - 4:10</b> <b>(English)</b></p>	<p><b>A Tiered Approach: An Introduction to the Three Tiers of Technology</b>  <b>Moderator: Jarred Aasen</b> (he/him), DRED Project and co-chair of the NDCWG</p> <p><b>Tier 1: Test Strip Trials and Tribulations</b>  <b>Jen Angelucci</b> (she/her), Drug Checking Research Data Coordinator, British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU)</p> <p><b>Tier 2: An FTIR Spectral Analysis Platform Made for Community-Based Drug Checking</b>  <b>Lea Gozdziwski</b> (she/her), Research Associate &amp; DC Technician, University of Victoria &amp; Substance</p> <p><b>Tier 3: Confirmatory Testing and Quantification of Complex Drug Mixtures by qNMR</b>  <b>Stéphanie Lessard</b> (she/her), Acting Manager – Strategic Research and Scientific Development, Drug Analysis Service, Health Canada</p>



# Day 1: Schedule February 24

Times	Session
<p><b>4:10-4:30</b> (English)</p>	<p><b>When We Know Better, Then We Do Better: How to Engage Research Between Universities and Community Organizations</b>  <b>Dr. Lauren Airth</b> (she/her), Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Victoria/Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research - <b>Ella Newman</b> (she/her), Master's of Science in Chemistry, University of Victoria, Drug Checking Technician at Substance - <b>Melissa Feddersen</b> (she/her), Manager, Campus Wellness and Education, University of British Columbia</p> <p>Sharing the perspective of a university student, decision maker, and researcher on drug checking engagement with the community. Hear about the ways in which communities and universities can better partner together in drug checking service delivery and what that means when it comes to university culture and protecting the interests of community groups.</p>
<p><b>4:30-4:50</b> (English)</p>	<p><b>Rural/Remote Drug Checking in Indigenous Communities: Building Relationships and Community Partnerships</b>  <b>Courtney Harrop</b> (she/her), ʔaḵimət Harm Reduction- Tla'amin Nation, Harm Reduction Coordinator and Drug Checking Project lead</p> <p>This presentation will discuss relationship building with PWUD in small communities in relation to drug checking services, and the values of deepening community partnerships.</p>
<p><b>4:50-5:00</b> (English)</p>	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b>  <b>Doris Payer</b> (she/her), Senior Knowledge Broker and co-chair of the NDCWG, CCSA</p>
<p><b>5:30 - 8:00</b></p>	<p><b>Social Gathering / 5 à 7</b>  📍 <b>Les 3 Brasseurs, 1658 rue Saint-Denis, Montréal, Québec H2X 3K6</b></p> <p>Join us for a casual and friendly social gathering at Les 3 Brasseurs! A great opportunity to relax, connect, and continue discussions in an informal setting.</p> <p>🍷 <b>Finger food &amp; non-alcoholic drinks will be provided.</b>  🍷 <b>Wine &amp; beer will be available for purchase.</b></p>

# Day 2: Schedule February 25

This part of the conference will be conducted in English. No interpretation is available.

Times	Session	Rooms
8 à 9	<b>Arrival of participants</b>	<b>M-450</b>
9:00 - 9:20	<p><b>Welcome back!</b>  <b>Symposium Snapshots &amp; Surprises: Sharing Highlights and Inspirations</b>  <b>Julie-Soleil Meeson</b> (elle/she), Responsable, contenu et valorisation de la pratique, AIDQ, DRED Project and co-chair of the NDCWG  <b>Doris Payer</b> (elle/she), Senior Knowledge Broker and co-chair of the NDCWG, CCSA  <b>Jarred Aasen</b> (il/he/him), DRED Project and co-chair of the NDCWG</p> <p>Kick off the second day with an engaging session where participants reflect on their personal highlights and unexpected moments from the symposium. This interactive discussion aims to foster connection, celebrate successes, and set a positive tone for the day's events.</p>	<b>M-450</b>
9:20 - 10:30	<p><b>Poster Presentations – Newspaper Exercise (Part 2) - Let's focus on the good news!</b>  <b>Moderator:</b> Julie-Soleil Meeson  <b>Who's participating?</b> Everyone!</p> <p>Let's focus on the good news! Participatory activity for all to share and learn about what people are working on in drug checking across Canada.</p>	<b>M-450</b>
10:30 - 11:00	<b>Break - coffee and snacks</b>	

# Day 2: Schedule February 25

This part of the conference will be conducted in English. No interpretation is available.

Times	Session	Rooms
11 - 12	<p><b>Do you see 2C-B too?</b>  <b>Antoine Marcheterre</b> (il), Responsable des Services d'Analyse de Substances, Interior Health BC</p> <p>The intention is to use 2C-B as a container for learning about drugs, drug checking and harm reduction by looking at its history, prevalence, and chemistry. We will discuss topics such as research chemicals, Tusi, molecular nomenclature, spectral differences and more. There will be a question period.</p>	M-450
11 - 12	<p><b>Connecting the Dots: Strategies for Harmonizing Drug Checking Data</b>  <b>Moderator:</b> Doris Payer, Senior Knowledge Broker and co-chair of the NDCWG, CCSA (moderator), Colin Steensma (he/him), Senior Epidemiologist, Office of Drug Research and Surveillance, Health Canada, Jen Angelucci (she/her), Drug Checking Research Data Coordinator, British Columbia Centre on Substance Use</p> <p><b>Interactive consultation</b></p>	M-465
12 - 1:30	Lunch	M-450

# Day 2: Schedule February 25

This part of the conference will be conducted in English. No interpretation is available.

Times	Session	Rooms
1:30 - 3:00	<p><b>Update on the Drug Checking Community of Practice &amp; Drug Checking Action Lab: Crafting the Future Together – Part 2</b></p> <p><b>Facilitated by:</b> Julie-Soleil Meeson</p> <p><b>Facilitators &amp; Topics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Data Sharing</b> – Doris Payer</li> <li>• <b>Continuing Education about Drugs</b> – Antoine Marcheterre</li> <li>• <b>Training</b> – Roxanne Hallal</li> <li>• <b>Sustainability and Future Directions</b> – Hayley Thompson</li> <li>• <b>Community Engagement</b> – Tanis Oldenburger</li> <li>• <b>Political, Legal, and Regulatory Frameworks</b> – Karen McDonald</li> <li>• <b>Technology</b> – Jarred Aasen</li> </ul> <p><b>This interactive workshop</b> invites you to play an active role in shaping the future of our drug checking community. Together, we will refine key focus areas such as Data Sharing, Training, and Community Engagement, ensuring they align with the evolving needs of our community.</p> <p>Through dynamic group discussions and hands-on activities, you will help identify concrete next steps and actionable strategies to strengthen our collective impact. This session is an opportunity to move beyond passive data exchange and actively work toward implementing effective training, meaningful discussions, and tool development for our community.</p> <p>Your input and engagement are essential in ensuring that our efforts lead to real-world impact.</p> <p><b>Let's shape the future of drug checking together!</b></p>	M-450
3 - 3:30	Break - coffee and snacks	

# Day 2: Schedule February 25

This part of the conference will be conducted in English. No interpretation is available.

Times	Session	Rooms
3:30 - 4:30	<p><b>Strategies and Innovations to Prevent Burnout and Trauma in the Context of the Toxic Drug Supply</b>  <b>Ali McMullin</b> (il), Intervenant psychosocial, Sub Check, Service de vérification des substances de PACT de rue</p> <p>This presentation explores innovative approaches to support teams facing the toxic drug supply. It focuses on organizational strategies aimed at preventing burnout and secondary trauma, addressing aspects such as human resources management, scheduling, and suicide prevention techniques. The goal is to share practical ideas to strengthen the resilience of practitioners and improve staff retention in this demanding context.</p>	M-450
3:30 - 4:30	<p><b>Defining drug checking: exploring language and terminology used by Ontario's Drug Checking Community (ODCC) and BCCSU Drug Checking</b>  <b>Hayley Thompson</b> (she/her), Toronto's Drug Checking Service and Ontario's Drug Checking Community &amp; <b>David Byers</b> (he/they), Training Coordinator, BCCSU</p> <p>BCCSU Drug Checking and Toronto's Drug Checking Service (the flagship program of Ontario's Drug Checking Community) are two of the most established community-based drug checking programs in the country. This presentation will explore how each program describes its services and communicates its findings from samples checked.</p>	M-465
4:30 - 4:35	<p><b>Déplacement pour mot de la fin</b></p>	M-450
4:35 - 5	<p><b>Next Steps and Closing Remarks</b>  <b>Julie-Soleil Meeson, Doris Payer &amp; Jarred Aasen</b></p>	M-450

# Overdose Prevention Services at the Event

## Harm Reduction Resources

Do you need supplies, drug checking services, or a safe consumption space? Three harm reduction organizations will be present to support you. Prevention and consumption materials will be available.

**If you're looking for information on services in Montreal, resources will be available at the welcome table.**

**📍 Visit the welcome table to check the schedule.**

There will be designated times to visit the mobile units—and to use them!

**A big thank you to GRIP, SABSA, and L'Anonyme!**



# Our Team

## Coordination Team

**Jarred Aasen**, DRED Project

**Julie-Soleil Meeson**, AIDQ & DRED Project

**Jennifer Noseworthy**, CCSA

**Doris Payer**, CCSA

**Chloe Sage**, DRED Project/Interior Health BC

## Logistics and Program Planning Committee

CCSA, and the DRED Project want to give a big shout-out to all these incredible folks who pulled off this event in record time. **Your availability, patience, and proactiveness were truly outstanding.** We couldn't have asked for a better team. Thank you all so much!

**Kay Angliss McDowell**, BC Centre on Substance Use

**Maiah Erica Capel**, CCSA

**Élise Étienne**, AIDQ

**Ana Gabrielle F. Guzman**, AIDQ

**Roxanne Hallal**, GRIP

**Kayla Halliday**, Spectrum Drug Checking

**Courtney Harrop**, Tla'amin Nation

**Antoine Marcheterre**, Interior Health

**Ali McMullin**, SubCheck/PACT de rue

**Gabrielle Nadaï**, CISSS de Laval

**Warren O'Briain**, BCCSU

**Tanis Oldenburger**, Mountainside Harm Reduction

**Mia Pohl**, Vancouver Coastal Health

**Douglas Rusk**, Spectrum Drug Checking

**Hayley Thompson**, Toronto's DC Service

**Andrea Wagner**, CCSA

**Tyler Watts**, Parkdale Queen West CHC



# Expressions of Gratitude and Acknowledgments

## A heartfelt thank you to all the individuals

who have generously devoted their time to present, moderate, host, volunteer, and actively participate in the important discussions surrounding drug checking. In a world where drug policy continues to have devastating consequences in Canada, your presence and contributions are instrumental in saving lives and nurturing our communities. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a supportive and dedicated DC community across Canada.



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## Special Thanks to Our Generous Sponsors

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the organizations that have provided invaluable financial support, making the DC Symposium possible.

Your unwavering support has not only brought this conference to life but has also made it accessible to countless individuals. Your commitment to our cause and dedication to advancing knowledge in the field of drug checking is sincerely appreciated.



Association des intervenants  
en dépendance du Québec