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For immediate release;



## **Introduction of Carepoint – Consumption and Treatment Services**

The overdose crisis continues to impact communities in Ontario and across Canada. Opioid-related deaths have been on the rise since 2003, with 1,474 opioid-related deaths in Ontario in 2018, according to Public Health Ontario (PHO). Southwestern Ontario continues to be one of the hardest hit regions in both urban and rural areas. In 2018, Middlesex-London had 62 opioid-related deaths (PHO).

London Ontario was the first community to open a provincially funded Overdose Prevention Site in February of 2018. In April 2019 the Temporary Overdose Prevention Site began the transition from a temporary solution to an annually funded Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS) as per the new provincial CTS program. RHAC is the primary program operator. RHAC works in collaboration with London Intercommunity Health Center (LIHC) to support medical components of the service with MLHU recognized as a vital founding partner and ongoing champion of this local public health response. On August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the CTS expanded operating hours to 12 hours per day, 365 days per year - including statutory holidays. “The increase in service hours has strengthened our capacity to respond to this crisis and we are grateful to the Ministry of Health for supporting the work in London” said Dr. Chris Mackie, Medical Officer of Health of MLHU.

Since the opening of the service at Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (RHAC), Middlesex London Health Unit (MLHU), along with many community partners have responded to this crisis by reversing over 209 opioid poisonings, supporting over 30,000 visits and facilitating hundreds and hundreds of referrals to a range of services including: addictions treatment and counselling, primary care, HIV/HCV testing and related clinical care, system navigation, detox services, housing and other vital social services.

While moving through the process to establish the intended permanent location, MLHU and RHAC worked together to identify a name worthy of the program’s remarkable impact. We are pleased to share with the community that the program is officially operating under the brand name of Carepoint. “By bringing this service to our community’s most marginalized we are demonstrating that we care about those who continue to struggle with addiction” said Brian Lester, Executive Director of RHAC, “and the point of the program is to provide life-saving services while ensuring other support needs are met – hence Carepoint”

The program name also has a brand identity that integrates the global overdose awareness colours of silver and purple. The branding graphic honours the origins of London’s Overdose Prevention site while transitioning to the new brand identity. Depending on your visual perspective when viewing the logo, it can be seen as OP for overdose prevention or CP for Carepoint.

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MLHU, RHAC and LIHC are pleased to share this milestone with our community as we continue to save lives, prevent new HIV and HCV transmissions and connect marginalized individuals to care and support across our community!

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