



CRISM - ICRIS

Canadian Research Initiative
in Substance Matters

Initiative Canadienne de Recherche sur
les Impacts des Substances psychoactives

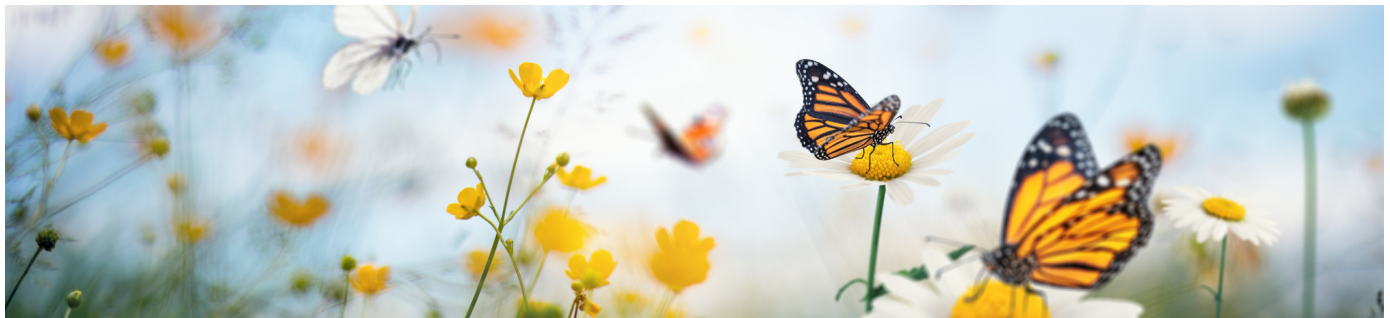
NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

JULY 2026

Welcome to the third edition of the CRISM National Newsletter.

As summer gets underway, we hope you're able to enjoy some well-deserved time to recharge while staying connected to the important work happening across the CRISM Network. This issue highlights the latest research, publications, funding opportunities, and events from our Nodes and national programs, reflecting the ongoing collaboration and innovation advancing substance use health across Canada.

Thank you for your ongoing contributions to CRISM and for being part of this growing national network. We wish you a safe, enjoyable, and restorative summer.



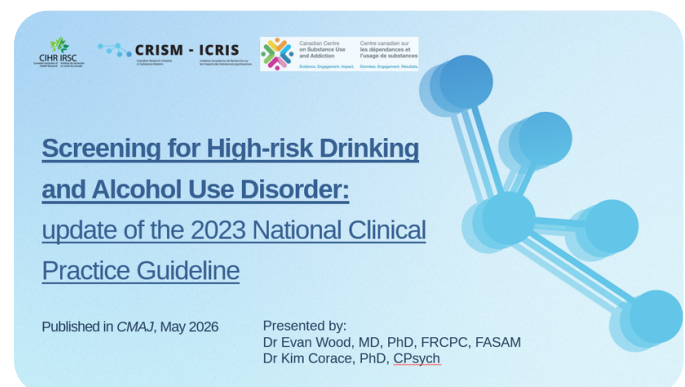
NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

National Webinar: Updated Canadian Recommendations for Alcohol Screening

On June 22, CRISM hosted a national webinar introducing the newly updated Canadian recommendations, *Screening for High-Risk Drinking and Alcohol Use Disorder: Update of the 2023 National Clinical Practice Guideline*.

Presented by Dr. Kim Corace and Dr. Evan Wood, the webinar welcomed more than 350 healthcare professionals, researchers, policy makers, and other stakeholders from across Canada.

Attendees learned about the evidence behind the updated recommendations, how to apply the new screening algorithm in clinical practice, identify patients who may benefit from further assessment for alcohol use disorder, and integrate routine alcohol screening through brief, evidence-informed conversations. Real-world case examples also highlighted practical implementation considerations across healthcare settings.



If you were unable to attend, or would like to revisit the presentation, the webinar recording is now available [here](#).

The full updated recommendations are also available to access [here](#).

Help shape the CRISM National Repository

CRISM is inviting members to [complete a short, optional survey](#) to support the development of a new national CRISM Repository, designed to complement local node membership. This repository will map expertise, projects, and areas of interest across the Network, making it easier to connect, collaborate, and strengthen knowledge sharing across nodes.

Your input is an important step toward building a more connected and collaborative CRISM community. Access the survey [here](#).

Follow CRISM National on LinkedIn

Stay connected with what's happening across the Network by following CRISM-ICRIS on LinkedIn. We'll be sharing national updates, publication, funding opportunities, and highlights from across nodes, helping keep you informed and connected across CRISM.

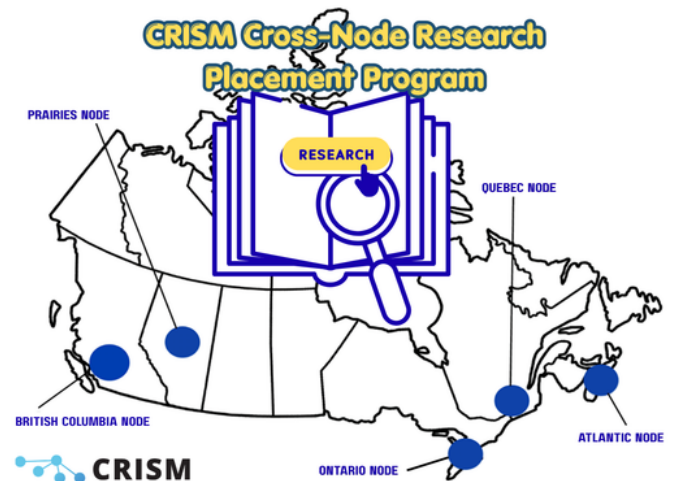


Follow along and stay engaged [here](#)!

CRISM National Cross-Node Research Placement Training Program - Second Launch (2026)

We are pleased to announce the second launch of the [CRISM National Cross-Node Research Placement Training Program](#) at the end of June 2026.

This program provides CRISM member trainees including senior undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows with the opportunity to gain in-person, cross-network substance use research training with a non-home CRISM Node. Trainees may choose from a list of available placement projects or identify another eligible project with a non-home Node host.



The program is open to CRISM members nationally and offers funding support of up to \$10,000 for eligible trainee placements.

Full program details, eligibility criteria, application materials, FAQs, and the project eligibility checklist are available on [the CRISM National website](#).

The Cross-Node Research Training Program will be hosting a Q&A session for interested applicants, supervisors and potential hosts on **July 15th (2 PM EST)**. Registration is required: [Cross Node Research Placement Q&A registration](#)

CRISM ATLANTIC

The Strategic Vision for Neuroscience, Mental Health & Addiction Research at CIHR and Dalhousie University

Dalhousie University and CRISM Atlantic were pleased to host the new Scientific Director of the Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction, Dr. Patricia Conrod along with INMHA team members, Dr. Anita Osaka Lemona and Dr. Teodora Riglea this month. Dr. Conrod presented INMHA's Brain Health Vision (2026-2040).

The day included tours of Dalhousie research spaces, along with poster and oral presentations from Dalhousie researchers and CRISM Atlantic members, highlighting the depth and breadth of work in this area. The session fostered thoughtful discussion on neuroscience, mental health, and addictions, and underscored the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration.

Access the INMHA-DAL 2026 visit overview document [here](#).



CRISM Atlantic Trainee receives recognition for her research related to substance use and resiliency

Isabella (Bella) Bossom, Clinical Psychology PhD Candidate, Dalhousie University, received the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) Clinical Section, Ken Bowers Award - awarded to the student with the most meritorious first-author publication- for her research on the dose-response relationship of alcohol on affect among individuals with major depressive disorder, *Behaviour Research & Therapy*. Bella was also awarded the CPA Rural and Northern Section, North Star Student Award for her research on substance use protective factors and is the incoming national student representative of this section (2026-2027).



Publications of Note

- *Anxiety sensitivity dimensions and the alcohol hangover experience: Longitudinal associations with hangover-related anxiety and depression.* (Addictive Behaviours)
 - *Improving hospital substance use care from the ground up and from the outside in.* (Canadian Journal of Public Health)
 - *Sex differences in alcohol-attributable emergency department utilization in Ontario (2000 - 2017): A population-based retrospective cohort study.* (International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction)
 - *The dose-response effects of alcohol on positive and depressed affect in major depressive disorder.* (Behaviour Research and Therapy)
 - *Chronic disease management among people treated for comorbid serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders: A population-based observational study.* (Community Mental Health Journal)
 - *Emotional psychopathology and coping cannabis use motives are involved in the link between anxiety sensitivity and adverse cannabis-related outcomes in Canadian emerging adults.* (Substance Use & Misuse).
 - *Taking action on concurrent disorders: Calls for action on collaborative research priorities in Canada.* (The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry)
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CRISM QUÉBEC

A New Chapter for the CRISM Quebec Node

The CRISM Quebec Node is entering a new chapter with key leadership transitions that build on more than a decade of growth, collaboration, and impact. After leading the Node for over 10 years, Dr. Julie Bruneau is passing the torch to Dr. Didier Jutras-Aswad as Principal Investigator. The Node also bids farewell to Aïssata Sako, whose leadership helped shape its development, and welcomes Fatma Boulouednine as the new Manager.

While leadership roles evolve, the mission remains the same: advancing research, knowledge mobilization, and collaboration to improve substance use and addiction care across Quebec and Canada. More information can be found [here](#).



Dr. Julie Bruneau



Aïssata Sako



Dr. Didier Jutras-Aswad



Fatma Boulouednine

“Expressing the Invisible”: From Community Event to Research Impact

On September 25, 2025, the Quebec Node supported a PWLE-designed event, “Exprimer L’Invisible – Expressing the Invisible.” On June 4, 2026, Isabelle Boisvert, Quebec Node Partnerships Lead, alongside Mélodie Talbot and Léonie Archambault, presented this initiative at the CRI 2026 Conference in Trois-Rivières, sharing not only the vision behind the event, but also its impacts—highlighting how it has contributed to research, sparked new initiatives, and strengthened more inclusive, participatory approaches. A dedicated website is currently in development and will be launched soon. Follow us on LinkedIn for more news about this initiative!



New Hard Knox Talks Episodes Developed in Collaboration with the CRISM Quebec Node

The CRISM Quebec Node is proud to have collaborated on the development of two new Hard Knox Talks episodes, hosted by Daniel Hearn who is also an IEP council member, recorded in Montreal. Featuring Pierre and Edmundo, these conversations explore lived experiences of substance use, mental health challenges, recovery, and healing. Through partnerships like these, the CRISM Quebec Node helps amplify diverse voices and support knowledge sharing that advances understanding of substance use and recovery.



Five Innovative Projects Funded by CRISM Quebec 2025 Research Development Program

The Quebec Node is proud to highlight five research projects funded through its **Research Development Program (2025 edition)**. This program supports innovative research initiatives led by its members and fosters collaboration to advance knowledge in substance use and related fields.

Project 1: *Participatory evaluation of innovative harm reduction practices adapted to the needs of socially disconnected and marginalized populations*

- Principal Investigator: Karine Bertrand (Sherbrooke University)
- Co-applicants: Léonie Archambault, Breitner Chaves, Jorge Flores-Aranda, David Martin Milot, Michel Perreault, Sandhia Vladlamudy

Project 2: *Participatory co-construction of a perinatal harm reduction stigma-reduction intervention for service providers and students in the field of health and social care*

- Principal Investigator: Léonie Archambault (IUD & Sherbrooke University)
- Co-applicants: Dennis Wendt, Sophia Dobischok, Marie-Ève Goyer, Maya Nader, Karine Hudon, Anne-Marie Mecteau, Isabelle Risler

Project 3: *Evaluation of the initial implementation of a peer-support training program for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth at risk of problematic substance use and homelessness*

- Principal Investigator: Maxime Blanchette (UQAT)
- Co-applicant: Élise Cournoyer-Lemaire

Project 4: *Sexuality and consent under the influence of alcohol: Understanding contemporary issues among women and queer individuals aged 18 to 25*

- Principal Investigator: Mathieu Goyette (UQAM)
- Co-applicants: Jorge Flores-Aranda, Adèle Morvannou, Laurence Ruel

Project 5: *Ketamine-assisted taper among adults living with iatrogenic benzodiazepine dependence: A pilot feasibility randomized placebo-controlled trial*

- Principal Investigator: Nicolas Garel (CRCHUM)
- Co-applicants: Kyle Greenway, Didier Jutras-Aswad, Elie Bou Assi, Irina Kudrina, Paul Lespérance, Valérie Mongrain, Alexandre Morin, Gabrielle Pagé, Christina McNulty



CRISM ONTARIO

Clarifying the evidence and implications of prioritizing extended-release buprenorphine for opioid agonist treatment in Canada's federal correctional system

In October 2025, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) updated its opioid agonist treatment (OAT) policy by removing buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone) from its formulary and designating extended-release buprenorphine (Sublocade) as the preferred first-line treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD). Members of the OCRINT team recently published a commentary highlighting limitations in the existing evidence base and arguing that restricting access to evidence-based OAT options among correctional populations risks undermining patient-centered care and is misaligned with clinical guidelines.

Please see the commentary [here](#).

Research Reveals Disproportionate Overdose Risk in Toronto's Homeless Population

A recent study by Dr. Fariyah Ali found that homeless women and gender-diverse people in Toronto are at much greater risk of fatal overdoses when compared to men, due to a number of factors. The study, published in BMC Public Health in late April, used publicly available data to examine patterns of homelessness, shelter service use and mortality.

"...when you combine higher exposure to risk with lower access to protective services, it can help explain why we're seeing such a disproportionate impact."

Toronto star article [here](#).



CRISM Research Recognized Among CIHR IHSPR's Top 10 Articles of the Year

The article entitled '*I won't make it without this program': the impact of safer opioid supply program closures in Ontario*' was recently recognized by the CIHR's Institute of Health Services and Policy Research as one of the Top 10 Articles of the Year in the 2025 IHSPR-CAHSPR Article of the Year Competition.

The competition received a large number of submissions from across Canada, and our paper was selected among the top ten articles following peer review by the competition committee. This recognition highlights the importance and impact of the work, as well as the collective efforts of everyone who contributed to the study.

The Top 10 Articles of the Year list has now been publicly announced and can be viewed [here](#)



New Study Explores Oxygen Therapy for Overdose Response in Ontario Shelters

Our latest study examines the implementation of oxygen therapy within Ontario shelter settings, identifying key facilitators, barriers, and practical recommendations to strengthen overdose response capacity among frontline shelter providers. The findings offer timely insights to inform policy and implementation efforts aimed at improving overdose prevention and response.

Find the article in the International Journal of Drug Policy [here](#).

New Report Examines the Impact of Supervised Consumption Services in Toronto

This report presents findings from the evaluation of Toronto Public Health's supervised consumption services, examining their impacts on service users, surrounding communities, and the broader health system. The report provides evidence to inform discussions on supervised consumption services, harm reduction, and overdose response in Ontario.

Find the full report [here](#).



Publications of Note

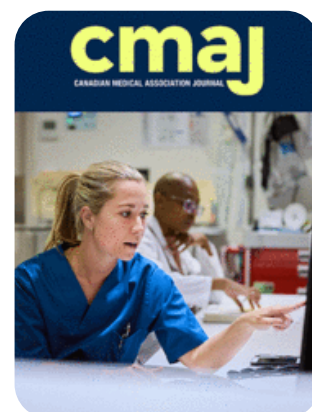
- *The short-term impacts of the decriminalization of personal possession of select illegal drugs on drug possession criminal incidents and criminal cases in British Columbia, Canada* (International Journal of Drug Policy)
- *A continuum of disconnection: the impacts of safer supply program disclosures on continuity of care, transition, and total loss of service access* (Harm Reduction Journal)
- *Framing decriminalization: A mixed-methods study on media narratives, government resources, misinformation, and public support of British Columbia's drug decriminalization policy* (International Journal of Drug Policy)

CRISM BRITISH COLUMBIA

Publication in CMAJ: Updated Canadian Recommendations for Alcohol Screening

The updated Canadian recommendations, Screening for *High-Risk Drinking and Alcohol Use Disorder: Update of the 2023 National Clinical Practice Guideline*, were published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ) in May 2026. Developed through a national collaboration led by CRISM and funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the updated recommendations introduce a streamlined, evidence-informed screening approach designed to make alcohol screening more practical and feasible in routine clinical care.

The full article available [here](#).



CRISM BC Welcomes New Manager of Indigenous Research Initiatives and Engagement

CRISM BC is pleased to welcome Blake Stitilis as the new Manager of Indigenous Research Initiatives and Engagement, effective June 1, 2026. In this role, Blake will support the work of the Indigenous Engagement Platform (IEP) on behalf of CRISM BC, working closely with the IEP to advance Indigenous-led initiatives, strengthen engagement, and support collaborative activities across the network. We are excited to welcome Blake to the CRISM community!



INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

Honouring National Indigenous History Month

June was National Indigenous History Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the histories, cultures, languages, and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. It is also an opportunity to reflect on our shared commitment to reconciliation and to advancing respectful, Indigenous-led research and partnerships across the CRISM Network.

Calling Indigenous Researchers, Knowledge Holders, and Community Partners Across CRISM

The CRISM Indigenous Engagement Platform (IEP) is inviting Indigenous researchers, Knowledge Holders, and community partners across the CRISM network to complete a short survey. The survey will help the IEP learn more about areas of expertise, research interests, and experiences across the network, informing future opportunities for collaboration and supporting the continued growth of Indigenous-led substance use research in Canada. We encourage eligible CRISM members and partners to participate and share the survey with others in their networks.

Access the survey [here](#).

Survey for Indigenous Researchers
in the CRISM Network



Transforming Pain into Power

The IEP provided \$15,000 to support the *Transforming Pain into Power with sâkhitowin & âhkamêyimowin: Responding to High-Risk Substance Use Summit*, helping to reduce barriers to participation. The event brought together Knowledge Keepers, Elders, students, academics, community leaders, and allies from across Turtle Island, with IEP Council members Dr. Barb Fornssler and Chantel Huel participating as presenters



Annual IEP Council & Circles Meeting

In early May, CRISM members from across Canada gathered in Montreal, Quebec, for the annual IEP Council & Circles Meeting. The gathering provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships, share knowledge, celebrate progress, and collaborate on priorities that will continue to advance Indigenous-led research and meaningful engagement across the CRISM network.



CRISM PRAIRIES

Publications of Note

- *Comparison of iloprost therapy versus non-iloprost therapy for severe frostbite: a retrospective cohort study of two Canadian cities* (BMJ Open)
- *Trends in fentanyl-containing drug samples seized by law enforcement agencies across Canada* (Addiction)
- *Risk of Heart Failure-related Events in Patients Exposed to Medical Cannabis: A Longitudinal Cohort Study* (Am J Med Open)
- *Staff perspectives on the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the provision of emergency department care for patients who use opioids* (CJEM)



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