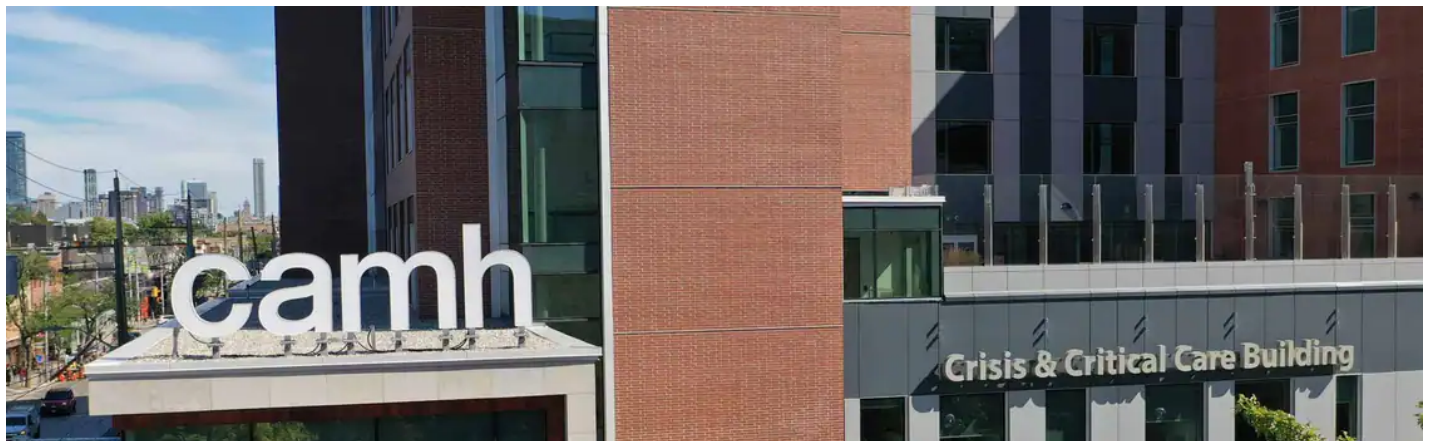


Toronto

Toronto prepares to ask Health Canada to decriminalize illicit drug possession

City say decriminalization is needed as drug-related deaths reach record highs

The Canadian Press · Posted: Oct 02, 2021 6:51 AM ET | Last Updated: October 2



The push to decriminalize drugs in Canada

8 days ago | 2:04

One of Canada's largest mental health facilities, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, is calling on the federal government to decriminalize all drugs and work with provinces to improve treatment and harm-reduction services. 2:04

Toronto is preparing to ask the federal government to decriminalize the possession of illicit drugs for personal use in the city.

It says the move is needed as drug-related deaths reach record highs.

A public consultation on the matter wrapped up this week, and the city's top doctor says Toronto expects to send its request to Health Canada later this fall. Vancouver made a similar request in May.

- [Drug decriminalization movement gaining momentum in Canada as overdose deaths surge](#)
- **LISTEN** [Inside the push to decriminalize opioids in Canada](#)

Toronto Public Health says it recorded 521 overdose-related deaths last year, up 78 per cent from 2019.

City data also shows paramedics responded to 93 overdose calls involving death over the first three months of this year compared to 46 during the same period in 2020.

Councillor Joe Cressy, who chair's Toronto's board of health, says decriminalization is a key element in a series of measures needed to tackle the overdose crisis, alongside increased treatments.

He says other measures include increased harm reduction services and a safer drug supply.

- [Toronto seeks federal exemption to decriminalize drug use as opioid overdoses rise](#)

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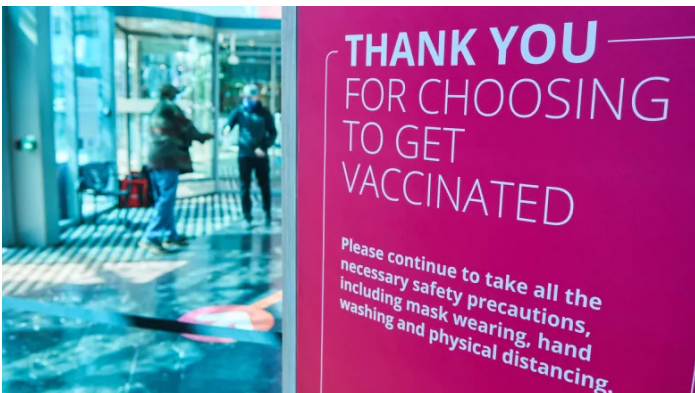
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