

**Ministry of Colleges
and Universities**

Deputy Minister

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**Ministère des Collèges
et Universités**

Sous-ministre

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MEMORANDUM TO: Presidents, Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology
Executive Heads, Publicly Assisted Universities

FROM: David Wai
Deputy Minister of Colleges and Universities

DATE: June 25, 2024

SUBJECT: **Substance Use and Overdose Prevention on Campuses**

I'm writing to you regarding the tragic incident involving the loss of a student's life due to overdose at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. This event serves as a poignant reminder of the critical importance of prioritizing student well-being and safety in our institutions.

The ministry recognizes that student safety and well-being are integral components of fostering a supportive and safe learning environment. This tragic incident underscores the urgency of our collective efforts to implement effective safety measures across campuses in Ontario and across the country.

As educational leaders, it is incumbent upon us all to uphold our responsibility to students, address risks to their well-being, and create a safe learning environment. I invite you to revisit your institution's protocols and procedures for responding to emergency situations impacting student safety and well-being. Best practices to support student health and prevent overdoses would include health promotion regarding substance use risks and how to prevent harms, access to naloxone, and facilitating awareness and access to evidence-based treatment for people with substance use disorders.

We encourage institutions to collaborate on best practices, including for situations that require lifesaving emergency intervention, that are responsive to the needs of students with substance use issues and addictions. These initiatives can be found on campuses across Ontario and within evidence and guidelines from experiences in British Columbia.

The ministry remains committed to providing support and guidance to ensure the well-being and safety of all students on our campuses.

Please reach out to Zoë Kroeker, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy and Planning Division, at Zoe.Kroeker@ontario.ca if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Wai', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Deputy Wai
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Colleges and Universities

c: Scott Allinson, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister of Colleges and Universities
Scott Ramsay, Director of Policy and Issues, Office of the Minister of Colleges and Universities
Zoë Kroeker, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy and Planning Division