

CoRE study offers one of the highest-quality comparative analyses available on overdose prevention services

Addiction, a globally leading scientific journal, recently published CoRE's findings on how the closure of an Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) in Red Deer, Alberta did not result in increased emergency department visits, opioid-related EMS (ambulance) events for site users, or deaths after the site closed, while more site users sought life-saving treatment.

"This study is the first of its kind. Much of the scientific publications to date supporting overdose prevention sites use population level data, or voluntary data from people who are motivated to be part of a study. Our research, using all identified site users, and comparing them to the users of a site that did not close, shows that closing the site had little to no impact on health care utilization," says Dr. Nathaniel Day, CoRE's Chief Scientific Officer.

WHAT MAKES THIS STUDY DIFFERENT

Alberta is the only jurisdiction that asks for health care identifiers to be collected when accessing an OPS, so researchers were able to examine outcomes for individuals who had actually used the services. This created a unique opportunity to assess how service changes affected real users, rather than relying solely on broader community trends.

To improve the quality and strength of this research, CoRE looked not only at the outcomes for Red Deer clients but also compared them to clients using a similar program in Lethbridge. This allowed researchers to better understand if any detected changes for Red Deer were related to the closure or related to other factors given that the Lethbridge site remained open.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH, TRANSPARENT PROCESS

CoRE's role is to evaluate programs and systems independently using accepted scientific methods, peer review, and transparent disclosure standards.

CoRE does not receive industry funding, determine research outcomes or direct how governments use findings. Its mandate is to provide credible evidence so decision-makers can assess policy options with greater clarity.

HOW RESEARCH INTEGRITY IS PROTECTED



PEER REVIEW



STANDARD
DISCLOSURE
PROCESS



TRANSPARENT
METHODS



REPLICABLE
ANALYSIS



INDEPENDENT
INTERPRETATION

MEET SOME OF THE EXPERTS

THE EDUCATION BEHIND THE EVIDENCE: *CoRE’s Applied Research and Evidence Team are experts in their field, with 67% holding PhDs and/or master’s degrees in science.*



DR. SHELLY VIK

Executive Director of
Evaluation and Research,
CoRE

Dr. Shelly Vik is a respected health systems researcher with deep expertise in applied analytics, population health, and evidence-based evaluation. She has led and contributed to large-scale research using administrative health data to improve care pathways, system performance, and policy decisions across Alberta. Dr. Vik has also held senior roles with Health Canada, Alberta Health Services and Recovery Alberta.

Dr. Vik holds an **Adjunct Academic Appointment with the University of Calgary**. Her published work spans opioid prescribing, continuity of care, chronic disease management, and health system analytics.



DR. DANIEL DEVOE

Principal Scientist,
CoRE

Dr. Daniel Devoe is a scientist specializing in mental health, addiction, cognition, and early intervention research. His work focuses on improving outcomes through evidence-based approaches to treatment, prevention, and behavioural health.

Dr. Devoe serves as **faculty with Mount Royal University** and maintains active academic involvement. His applied research includes youth mental health, addiction recovery, psychological treatment models, and innovative approaches to care.



DR. SHANNON GRAVELY

Principal Scientist,
CoRE

Dr. Shannon Gravely is an internationally recognized interdisciplinary researcher working with collaborators across **more than 30 countries**. Her expertise includes population health policy, harm reduction, behavioural science, cannabis regulation, and evaluation of public health interventions.

Dr. Gravely holds **Academic Adjunct Appointments at the University of Waterloo and the University of Calgary**. Her work has informed major comparative studies on health behaviour and policy systems worldwide.



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**RECOVERY
HAPPENS IN
MANY PLACES,
INCLUDING THE
WORKPLACE.**

Recovery Friendly Workplace series gains international attention

Recovery happens in many places, including the workplace.

For individuals living with mental health or substance-related disorders, meaningful employment can be a powerful recovery support. Work can provide structure, routine, purpose, income stability, social connection, and opportunities for personal growth.

Recognizing this, CoRE worked with Dr. Charl Els to develop the **Recovery Friendly Workplace Series**, a collection of evidence-informed, physician developed resources offering guidance for employers on how to better support individuals with mental illness or addiction to start or sustain recovery in the workplace while maintaining healthy, safe, and productive workplaces.

Healthy workplaces benefit everyone. When employees thrive, organizations become stronger, communities become more resilient, and economies grow.

Through applied research and practical guidance, CoRE is helping advance **evidence-based** approaches **that support both recovery and workforce success**.

More information on our Recovery Friendly Workplace findings and guidance is available in the Library at recoveryexcellence.org



► *For individuals living with mental health or substance-related disorders, meaningful employment can be a powerful recovery support.*

WHY IT MATTERS

Mental health and substance-related challenges affect workers, families, businesses, and communities across Canada.

Recovery-friendly workplaces can help reduce stigma, improve retention, strengthen workforce participation, and support earlier intervention when employees need help.

For government and industry leaders alike, these approaches represent a practical opportunity to improve both social and economic outcomes.

CANNABIS GUIDELINES DEVELOPED IN ALBERTA ADOPTED BY OEMAC

Dr. Els and his team wrote the updated position statement for cannabis use in safety sensitive and decision critical workplaces, which was adopted by the Occupational and Environmental Medical Association of Canada (OEMAC). This is seen as the new standard to guide workplace safety policy and occupational health decisions amid growing cannabis use and legalization in Canada.

GUIDELINE KEY FINDINGS:

1

Cannabis can impair cognitive and motor function through intoxication, residual effects, withdrawal, and chronic use.

2

The variability in individual responses and cannabis products complicates detection and risk assessment.

3

Most studies don’t reflect real-world use, limiting their relevance.



**EVIDENCE YOU CAN READ IN MINUTES:
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION BRIEFS**

CoRE’s Mental Health and Addiction Briefs translate complex research, emerging issues, and policy topics into short, easy-to-read summaries. In just 10 months, CoRE has produced **seven briefs**, with an eighth edition arriving in June.

**May Brief Highlight:
Drug Treatment Courts**

May’s brief explores Drug Treatment Courts (DTCs), which help people with non-violent, addiction-driven criminal offences break the cycle of substance use and crime through structured treatment instead of jail. Participants receive supports such as counselling, housing assistance, relapse prevention, and regular court supervision. Alberta results show approximately 80% graduate, and of those graduates, approximately 70% do not reoffend.

Why It Matters

Before DTCs existed, non-violent drug related crimes were handled through the criminal justice system with no real opportunity to break the cycle of crime and work towards recovery. Conversely, DTCs show how accountability, treatment, and recovery supports can work together to improve recovery outcomes and reduce drug related crimes.

CoRE’s Mental Health and Addiction Briefs are available in the Library at recoveryexcellence.org



CoRE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

CoRE CEO **Kym Kaufmann** and Chief Scientific Officer, **Dr. Nathaniel Day**, are elevating Alberta's voice in addiction, recovery, and evidence-based policy discussions.

In March, Kym Kaufmann was invited to attend the **69th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)** in Vienna as part of the Canadian delegation. Hosted through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the CND is the world's leading intergovernmental forum for international drug policy. It brings together member states to share evidence, address emerging challenges, and shape coordinated global responses.

WHY IT MATTERS

Participation at this level ensures Canada remains engaged in international dialogue, accountability, and policy development on rapidly evolving substance use challenges. Kaufmann's inclusion in the delegation also created an opportunity to showcase the Alberta Recovery Model, and the province's focus on recovery-focused innovation and outcomes on the world stage.

OUTCOMES SHARED AT MAJOR NORTH AMERICAN EVENTS

On April 23, 2026, Dr. Nathaniel Day presented at the **American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) 57th Annual Conference** in San Diego, California about the effectiveness and key components of Recovery Communities, an important element of the Alberta Recovery Model. He also spoke to the National Commission on Correctional Healthcare (NCCHC) on April 18, 2026

on Alberta's Transitional Services in Corrections and the success they are having with integrating addiction recovery services into correctional facilities.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION IN CHILE

Kaufmann was also invited to speak at the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States in Chile on May 14, 2026.

CICAD brings together representatives from 35 countries across the Americas and is one of the region's most influential forums focused on substance use, addiction, and recovery policy.

These events reflect increasing international recognition of Alberta's and CoRE's work advancing recovery-oriented systems of care grounded in evidence, measurable outcomes, and real-world results.

CoRE CHIEF SCIENTIFIC OFFICER RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS PEER RECOGNITION



Congratulations to CoRE's Chief Scientific Officer, Dr. Nathaniel Day, on being named the **2026 recipient of the Effectuating Change in Opioid Use Disorder Care Award** by the Western Canada Addiction Forum.

This award is especially meaningful because it comes from a well-established professional forum that brings together peers from addiction medicine, research, and systems of care across Western Canada.

Through his leadership, Dr. Day has helped advance new standards of care grounded in evidence, focused on recovery, and designed to improve outcomes for Albertans living with addiction and mental health challenges.

His work has contributed to meaningful systems change that supports individuals, families, and communities.



ESTABLISHED:
2024 as a Crown Corporation

MANDATE:
Objectively inform government, health-care communities, and global leaders toward effective recovery-oriented mental health and addiction services.

GOAL:
To bridge the gap between research and real-world solutions.

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