



GOOD NEWS FOR GOOD SAMARITANS!

On May 4, 2017, the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act became law in Canada. The purpose of the Act, introduced by Member of Parliament Ron McKinnon, is to improve 911 call-rates at overdose emergencies and encourage witnesses to continue assisting the victim(s) until medical assistance arrives.[1]

An overdose is a medical emergency.

Overdose victims depend on witnesses or 'good samaritans' for emergency medical care.

Across Canada, the best medical advice always includes calling 911 during an emergency. Research from the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council in 2012 demonstrated that multiple barriers exist to prevent witnesses from calling 911, primarily fear of police presence and potential involvement with the criminal justice system.[2]

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act amends the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act ("CDSA") to exempt both victim(s) and witnesses from being charged or convicted of the offence of simple possession of drugs when emergency help is sought for an overdose, if the evidence in support of the offence was obtained or discovered as a result of seeking assistance or remaining at the scene. Seeking emergency help could include calling 911, leaving the scene to call 911 or leaving the scene to locate emergency medical assistance. An individual who calls 911 but leaves before emergency services arrive has the same exemption.[3]

For more information visit: www.overdoseprevention.ca

