

## Brendan Hanley

Member of Parliament for Yukon

Député du Yukon

### News Release

For Immediate Release

#### **Member of Parliament Dr. Brendan Hanley initiates committee study on Canada's Opioid Epidemic and Toxic Drug Crisis**

*Following a motion moved by MP Hanley, a study is underway by the Standing Committee on Health (HESA) to examine the opioid and toxic drug crisis in Canada*

December 14, 2023

Families and communities in the Yukon and right across Canada have been touched by the tragedies of the opioid epidemic. Based on the most recent reports, more than 1,900 Canadians died from opioids in the first three months of 2023. On average, that is 21 Canadians dying per day as a result of a toxic drug supply. The death toll continues to rise.

The Government of Canada has worked with experts to pursue a suite of substance use services to respond to the crisis. The [Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy](#) is based upon a four-pillar approach: prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and enforcement. [Budget 2023](#) makes a renewed commitment of \$359 million over five years to continue to support this strategy. However, the scale of our nation-wide response has yet to meet the need.

Recognizing the importance and urgency of the opioid epidemic for Yukoners and Canadians, and in his role on the HESA Committee, MP Dr. Brendan Hanley moved a motion to further study Canada's opioid epidemic and toxic drug crisis. As of December 2023, the study by HESA Committee is now underway and will continue into 2024. As part of the study, the Committee will hear from expert witnesses. Ultimately, based upon its analysis, the Committee will compile a report with recommendations to inform and adapt the government's opioid response.

MP Hanley invites Yukoners to submit briefs to HESA Committee to provide their opinions, comments, and recommendations on this subject, in order to help Committee members understand a variety of perspectives on the issue. These briefs will become public documents listed as an appendix to the Committee's report, and will be considered in its final recommendations and report.

### Quotes

"In April 2016, when I was Chief Medical Officer of Health for the territory, we witnessed the first fentanyl death in the Yukon. In that same month, BC declared a public health emergency due to a shocking rise in opioid deaths in that province. Today, the Yukon has one of the highest opioid and toxic drug-related death rates in the country. Indigenous people remain disproportionately affected. We are determined to address the urgency of this crisis, as well as the need to focus on Indigenous, rural, northern and remote communities."

- *Dr. Brendan Hanley, Member of Parliament for the Yukon*

# Brendan Hanley

Member of Parliament for Yukon

Député du Yukon

## Quick Facts

- The Standing Committee on Health (HESA) studies issues that relate to Health Canada, including bills and regulations. It also has oversight of four health-related agencies, including the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- The Standing Committee on Health is a parliamentary committee comprised of 12 MPs.
- MP Dr. Hanley's motion was moved and adopted on January 31, 2023.
- This motion requires the Committee to hold a minimum of 8 meetings on this study, including one meeting with an explicit focus on the toxic drug crisis in Indigenous, rural, northern, and remote communities.

## Associated Links

- [HESA Committee](#)
- [Committee Study on Opioid Epidemic and Toxic Drug Crisis in Canada](#)
- [Guide for submitting briefs to House of Commons Committees](#)

## Contacts

Talia Hodgkinson  
Office of MP Brendan Hanley  
[talia.hodgkinson.901@parl.gc.ca](mailto:talia.hodgkinson.901@parl.gc.ca)

## Stay connected

Follow MP Hanley on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)