



ICI Northern Ontario An addiction clinic open to all

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No need for physician referral: a new fast-track drug treatment clinic in Northeastern Ontario is an unprejudiced gateway for people seeking care help.

The clinic, associated with the Espanola Family Health Center, west of Sudbury, shares the premises of the regional hospital to provide treatment services to patients who are addicted to alcohol and opioids.

These services are available to the general population, without the need to first go through a health professional.

« This is important because the person may be in crisis. She determined that she needs help today, today she is going to get help. »

— Donna Stewart, Director of Integrated Social Services, Manitoulin District Services Board

Accompanied by an addiction specialist, patients can talk to a doctor via teleconference. They are then given a weaning program that ranges from several weeks to several months, as needed.



Donna Stewart, Director of Integrated Social Services, Manitoulin District Services Board Photo: Radio-Canada / Jean-Loup Doudard

The official opening of the clinic took place on Tuesday, but the establishment has been in existence since November. Thirty people already follow these withdrawal programs. About half of them have been admitted for alcohol dependence while the others are on opioid-related treatment.

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« We are beginning to see that the quality of life of these patients is increasing to the point where they no longer need to come to the clinic », says Jon Brunetti, manager of primary care at the Espanola Family Health Center. At least one participant has completed the program and is now sober, according to him.

This kind of clinic is essential for the village, according to Allison Dodge, an addiction specialist.

« I find that there are more and more overdoses. There are those people in their twenties who come to see us and who really need help because they are very dependent. »

— Allison Dodge, addiction specialist



Sold in particular under the names of "Purple" or "Purp", this variant of heroin is mixed with fentanyl and can be fatal. Photo: Timmins Police Service

A new form of heroin that contains fentanyl and is sold under the name of "purple" or "purp" has appeared in the region, she said.