

Memorandum

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September 17, 2021

To: All Paramedics

From: Dr. Russell MacDonald Leo Tsang

Medical Director A/Deputy Chief, Operations

Re: Documenting Suspected Opioid Overdoses

As we work through the fourth wave of the pandemic due to SARS-CoV2, we cannot forget that in its shadow is an epidemic of opioid-related overdoses and deaths. In 2017, Toronto Paramedic Services began collaborating with Toronto Public Health to share call information for suspected opioid overdoses attended by Paramedics in Toronto.

The information that you provide about suspected opioid overdose patients is invaluable to Public Health. It helps find cases, identify trends, and target public health program and harm reduction interventions. We review and share data with Public Health daily, and no other agency or service can provide such up-to-the-minute information about suspected overdoses. You can see how the information you include in your ePCR is used by Public Health by clicking on https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-inspections-monitoring/toronto-overdose-information-system/. The information includes the numbers and neighbourhoods of cases where responding Paramedics suspect opioid overdoses have occurred.

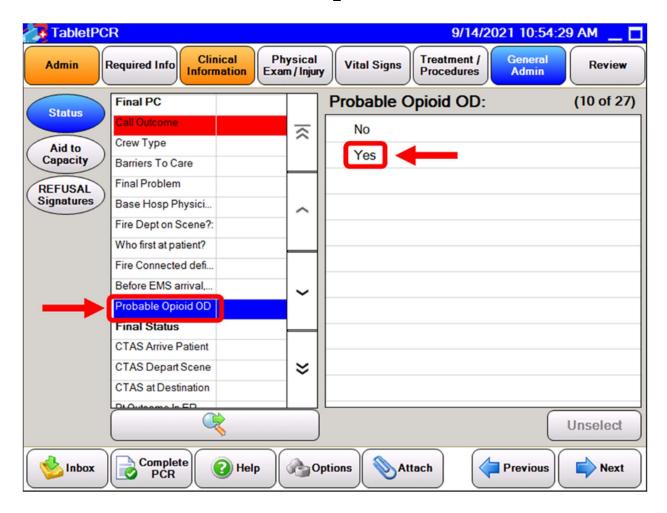
ePCR Documentation

In recent months, we are finding calls where "yes" to a probable opioid overdose is checked but, upon review, it appears opioids were not involved or there was no overdose.

If checking "yes", please ensure you have confidence that opioids were likely involved in the overdose. This may be based on information from the patient or bystanders (e.g., "smoking/shooting fentanyl"), what you find at the scene (e.g., drug paraphernalia), or your findings during the patient assessment (e.g., pinpoint pupils, slow respirations or apnea). This will help make the data we collect more reliable.

A call gets included in the daily list of suspected opioid overdoses when you flag it on your ePCR:





If you have any questions about this, or our partnership with Public Health in addressing the opioid crisis in Toronto, please contact Commander Adam Thurston by email at Adam.Thurston@toronto.ca.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts in caring for the people of Toronto. Please stay well and stay safe.

Sincerely,

(Original signed by)
Dr. Russell MacDonald

(Original signed by) Leo Tsang

c. P. Raftis, Deputy Chiefs, Operations Commanders, A. Thurston, J. Burnett, M. Jordison, Deputy Commanders, Multimedia

