# CRISM National iOAT Environmental Scan
# 2018 – 2023 RESULTS

*Key findings from repeat surveys of Canadian iOAT programs*

BRITISH COLUMBIA
CENTRE ON
**SUBSTANCE USE**
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## Background

The CRISM **injectable opioid agonist treatment (iOAT) environmental scan** was conducted annually across Canada with the goals:
1) Mapping out iOAT programs across Canada;
2) Describing their services and clients; and
3) Identifying barriers, gaps and strengths from the point of view of service providers.

## Methods

iOAT programs were found through the national CRISM research network and internet searches. Each program or site named a contact person to complete phone or email surveys at each scan date. Contacts checked to ensure findings were accurate. The first two e-scans were conducted in September 2018 and March 2019, with annual scans thereafter until March 2023.

## Results

### Number and Location of iOAT Programs

**Legend**

- Scan 1 – Existing programs
- Scan 2 – New programs
- Scan 3 – New programs
- Scan 4 – New programs
- Scan 5 – New programs
- Scan 6 – New programs

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Scan 1 | September 1, 2018 | 11 programs |
| Scan 2 | March 1, 2019 | 11 programs (2 new, 2 discontinued) |
| Scan 3 | March 1, 2020 | 14 programs (3 new) |
| Scan 4 | March 1, 2021 | 15 programs (1 new) |
| Scan 5 | March 1, 2022 | 17 programs (2 new) |
| Scan 6 | March 1, 2023 | 14 programs (1 new, 2 discontinued + Alberta programs reconfigured) |



**Figure 1. New iOAT programs across Canada, annually**

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## Clients

| | | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total # client starts | | 625 | 781 | 1041 | 1206 | 1247 | 1616 |
| # active clients | | 250 | 270 | 401 | 297 | 366 | 374 |
| # on waitlists | | 395+ | 499+ | 441+ | 260+ | 213+ | 224+ |
| Active client age | Mean | 46.5 | 43 | 45.8 | 40.5 | 41.6 | 41.5 |
| | Range | 21-69 | 21-69 | 17-70 | 18-71 | 19-76 | 22-72 |
| Active client gender* | Men | 73% | 68% | 68% | 73% | 75% | 72% |
| | Women | 27% | 32% | 32% | 26% | 23% | 28% |

**Table 1. iOAT client demographics over time**

**Note:** Starts = # clients who had iOAT for 1st time; Active = # who had iOAT within 7 days of scan date

*\*Individuals identifying as 'other' gender constituted 0-1% annually*

## 2023 iOAT Service Delivery Models

**#**

**Embedded/Integrated**
iOAT offered in existing health, harm reduction or social services

**10**

**Comprehensive/Dedicated iOAT clinic**
Wrap-around care at health clinic only for iOAT clients  e.g. clinic,  hospice, housing

**2**

**Hospital-based**
iOAT given during hospital stay

**1**

*Note: the pharmacy service model, in which iOAT is started at a health care clinic and continued at a community pharmacy, had been discontinued by the end of the scan years*
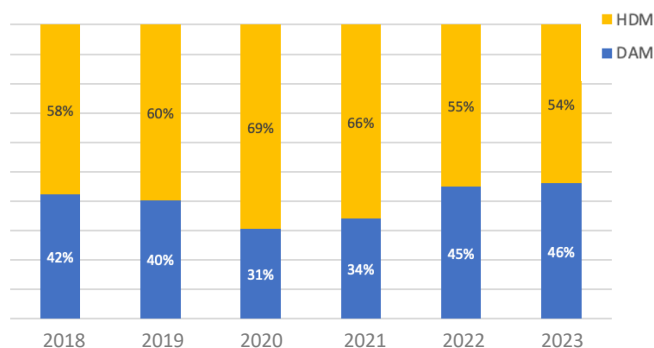
## iOAT Medications Given



**Figure 3. Proportion of iOAT clients receiving either medication option, annually**

## Changes to Services Over Time

- Renovations to increase space or capacity
- Quicker delivery of iOAT after prescription
- Expanded onsite services and offsite referrals
- Fewer doses per day = increased client flexibility
- Updated standards, protocols, system

## Barriers

**Care processes**
- High intensity treatment, rigid structure

**Access to medication**
- Limited dosing/ medication options
- Toxic street drug supply rendering treatment less effective

**Access to services**
- Limits to funding, opening hours,   staff coverage, capacity & physical space
- Limited access to wrap-around supports

**Client factors**
- Lack of stable housing
- Concurrent stimulant use (iOAT contraindicated)
- Stigma against clients & treatment

## Enablers

**Care approach**
- Low barrier, housing-first, evidence-based, client-centered, harm reduction
- Flexible dosing schedule
- Foster relationships among clients & with staff
- Collaborative multi-disciplinary teams
- More sites offering peer support

**Care processes**
- Simple intake process
- Active client follow-up

**Access to services**
- Strong community partners (e.g., pharmacy)
- On-site services

**Staffing**
- Strong communication, peer support workers, nurse training

## Contact

Please contact the evaluation team with any questions or concerns: ioatstudy@bccsu.ubc.ca

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