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The ban on safe supply

The NTS: a blueprint for government control

Disclosures

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We aim to use person-first and inclusive language in this presentation. We will almost certainly make mistakes, but please let us know after the talk or contact us if you notice anything that could be improved:
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Mental Health Services Protection Regulation

The Narcotic Transition Service

The NTS – the basics

In October 2022, new standards for ‘narcotic transition services’ were announced, through an amendment to the *Mental Health Services Protection Regulation*. **This is law.** We were given until March 2023 to move patients over to OAT or NTS.

Impacts inpatient and outpatient care, developed with little input from experts

“Services focus on stabilizing, tapering and transitioning patients under expert medical supervision to evidence-based opioid agonist treatment (OAT) medications from “high potency opioid narcotics”



Safe supply can only be prescribed at NTS clinic

Safe supply can only be dispensed at NTS clinic

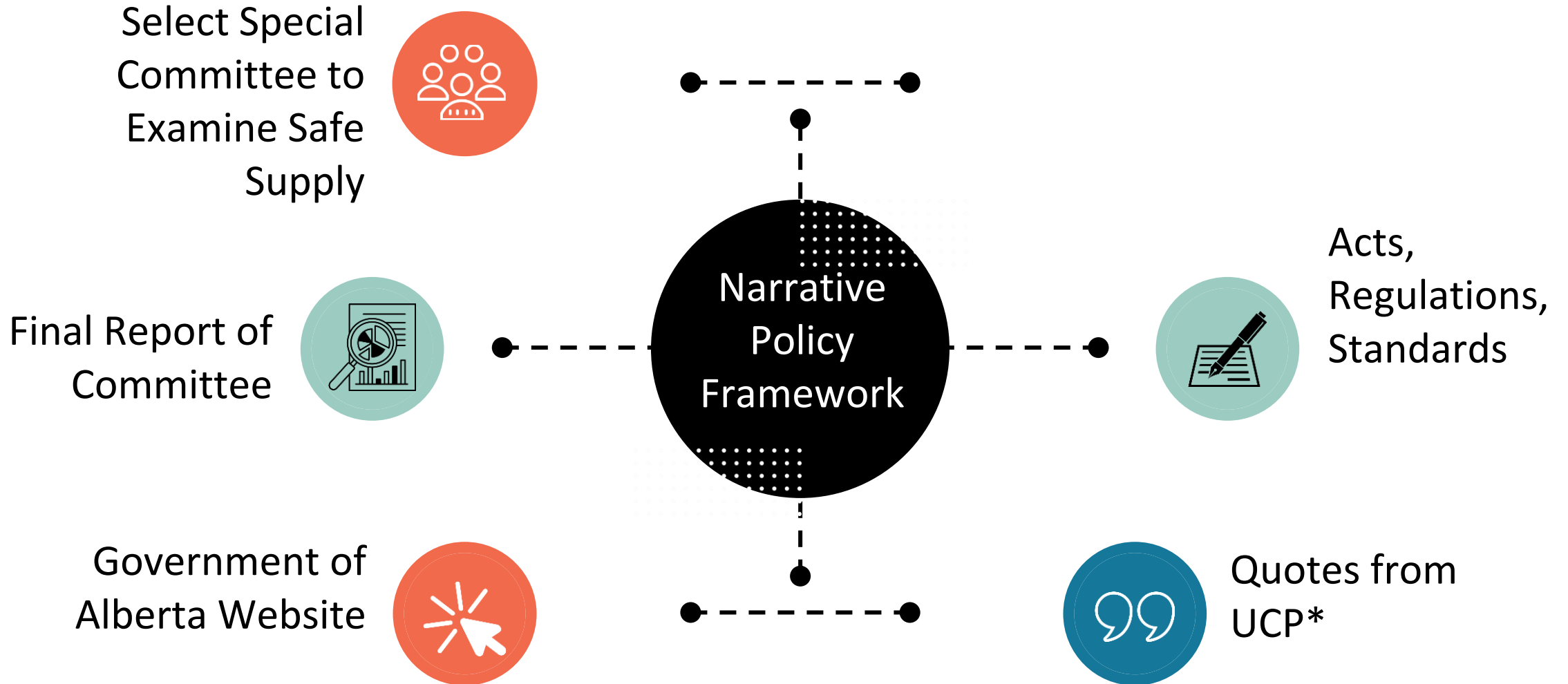
All doses must be witnessed, and only at NTS clinic



Narrative Policy Framework

The Narcotic Transition Service

Understanding how we got to NTS



What characters did the UCP describe in safe supply committee transcript and report?



Victims
People with addiction
Communities



Heroes
Alberta government



Villains
People in safe supply programs
Pharmaceutical industry
Physicians
BC government
Advocates of safe supply



Shadow Characters
Safe Supply (personification)
Addiction (personification)
Police

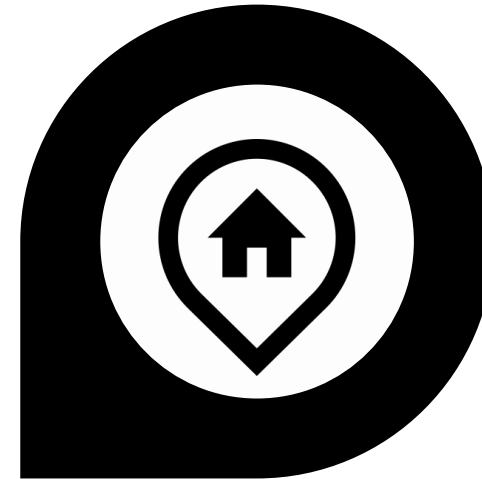
What narratives are being told by the UCP?

Story of **Helplessness** and **Loss of Control**

**Not harm
reduction!**



**The harms will be
felt in your home**



**Doctors are one of
the causes**



**Pharmaceutical
companies are in
control**



Any of this sounding familiar?

Alberta's narrative is **not unique**

VANCOUVER | News

'They don't care that you're a kid': Teen shares how drug dealers market substances as 'safe supply'

News / Local News

Harms of safe drug supply program outweigh benefits: Addictions specialist

A London doctor at the centre of a national political debate over opioid programs says she had no intention of becoming a talking point for the federal Conservative party.

Randy Richmond

Published May 20, 2023 • Last updated May 20, 2023 • 4 minute read

Nova Scotia

Doctors Nova Scotia working on strategy to offer safe drug supply for patients with addictions

Not many doctors offer the treatment, but the provincial body that represents them is trying to make it easier

 Tom Ayers · CBC News · Posted: Sep 16, 2022 3:00 AM MDT | Last Updated: September 16, 2022

"If I prescribed a high dose of narcotic to a patient who subsequently overdosed, I could be held medico-legally responsible for that person's death, either by the patient's family or the regulatory bodies and could lose my licence over that," she said

... and how do we fix **Helplessness** and **Loss of Control**?

1

Control the dangerous drugs



2

Control the irresponsible doctors



Mental Health Services Protection Regulation

- Community Protection and Opioid Stewardship Standards
- Narcotic Transition Services



What would you do?

The Narcotic Transition Service

The NTS – after release

Open letters, private addresses and meetings

Media – interviews, articles, op-eds

Social media

CPSA, CMPA, CARNA inquiries, publications

Court challenge

And?



Calgary

Calgary woman seeking 'narrow, individual exemption' over Alberta opioid restrictions



Diagnosed with severe opioid use disorder after becoming dependent on the drugs as a teen

[Bill Graveland](#) · The Canadian Press · Posted: Mar 01, 2023 12:37 PM MST | Last Updated: March 1

Calgary · The Way Out

Why an Alberta lawyer is pushing back on part of the province's new addictions strategy



Avnish Nanda arguing for Calgary woman to keep access to self-administered opioid



[Judy Aldous](#), [Carla Turner](#) · CBC News · Posted: Feb 07, 2023 5:00 AM MST | Last Updated: February 7

Court challenge

Reasons for Decision of the Honourable Justice Colin C.J. Feasby
Citation: Black v Alberta, 2023 ABKB 123

“...The evidence at this stage of the litigation shows that Ms. Black has a strong position that her **constitutional rights have been infringed, that she will suffer irreparable harm**, and it is clear that the balance of convenience weighs in her favour. I am satisfied that this is an appropriate case in which to grant an injunction.”

The only person legally accessing safe supply in Alberta has that access because of legal action.



What's next?

The Narcotic Transition Service



What can the community of practice do about it?

We need to plan ahead.

Historically, two things have shown some efficacy –
coordinated campaigns and **legal action**.



Could we explore fundraising to cover impending legal fees for patients? Can we explore hiring a PR firm to help run a nation-wide campaign?

We need to take action in a novel way
with a united voice.



Thoughts?
Ideas?
Questions?

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