

## New Vital Focus Series details the secondary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Guelph and Wellington County

Guelph, Ont., September 28, 2020—The Guelph and Wellington communities have met the COVID-19 pandemic with resilience, agility and resourcefulness. By and large, the community has followed the science, evidence-based decisions and policies put out by our public health and local government officials. And the results have been good.

Two things, however, are in play.

1. The number of COVID-19 cases in Ontario is on the rise—the pandemic is not over.
2. The effects of the pandemic aren't limited to those who are infected with COVID-19 and their families.

[Toward Common Ground](#) (a collaboration of social and health system partners) has developed a [Vital Focus Series](#) of reports to build awareness of the secondary impacts of the pandemic with critical contributions from key partners, including:

- The Guelph Community Foundation,
- City of Guelph,
- County of Wellington,
- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health,
- and the Guelph & Area Ontario Health Team.

The series uses national and local data to provide evidence-based recommendations for community organizations, institutions and all orders of government on how to mitigate and address the secondary impacts of the pandemic over the long term.

The first two Vital Focus reports cover the secondary effects of the pandemic on:

**Food insecurity:** Because of the pandemic, food insecurity may affect more people and be more severe. The pandemic may magnify existing disparities and disproportionately affect food-insecure households. According to a Statistics Canada study, food insecurity across Canada has increased and is significantly higher during COVID-19 compared to a 2017/2018 reference period.



**Alcohol and substance use:** COVID-19 is changing the way people use substances and causing more substance-related harm. Reports of substance-related overdoses between January and August, 2020 in Guelph increased by 7 per cent compared to the same time period in 2019, from 195 to 208. And substance-related overdose deaths during the same period in Guelph increased by 200 per cent, from 5 to 15.



Upcoming Vital Focus topics include the secondary impacts of the pandemic on mental health, families with children, and employment with more topics in development. Those reports will be released over the next several months.

Increasing awareness of the effects of the pandemic across a broad range of issues on the people in our community helps to understand their most urgent needs and how best to serve them as we continue to work together to respond and recover from COVID-19.

The release of the Vital Focus series will surface opportunities for individuals and organizations to work together across sectors (e.g., social, health, education, environment, transportation, and arts and culture sectors) to affect change and advocate for our community's needs with a united voice.

## Resources

[Vital Focus Series webpage](#)

[Vital Focus on food insecurity](#)

[Vital Focus on alcohol and substance use](#)

## Contacts

If you would like to know more about the Vital Focus Series or either of the topic areas, please get in touch.

### **Vital Focus Series**

Sarah Haanstra

[Toward Common Ground](#)

[sarahhaanstra@gmail.com](mailto:sarahhaanstra@gmail.com)

### **Alcohol and substance use**

Adrienne Crowder

[Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy](#)

[acrowder@guelpchc.ca](mailto:acrowder@guelpchc.ca)

### **Food insecurity**

Dominica McPherson

[Guelph and Wellington Poverty Task Force](#)

[dominica@gwpoverty.ca](mailto:dominica@gwpoverty.ca)