



Government of Canada
Privy Council Office

Canada's Fentanyl Czar

INTERIM REPORT

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Canada's Fentanyl Czar Interim Report.

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Canada's Fentanyl Czar

In February 2025, the Prime Minister announced the appointment of Kevin Brosseau as Canada's new Fentanyl Czar, formally the Commissioner of Canada's Fight Against Fentanyl, the centerpiece of a suite of border related actions taken by Canada as part of its ongoing commitment to negotiate a new economic and security relationship with the United States.

With an extensive career in law enforcement, most recently as Deputy National Security and Intelligence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Brosseau is mandated to work closely with his U.S. counterparts and law enforcement agencies to accelerate Canada's ongoing work in tackling the deadly fentanyl trade.

As the point person in enhancing operational collaboration and cooperation in combatting fentanyl, Brosseau is leading a Team Canada approach. Every week he convenes all involved Departments and Agencies across the federal government to implement the Border Plan and drive the fight against fentanyl.

Since February, the Czar has met and worked closely with all levels of government in Canada, his U.S. and international partners, and stakeholders across the country to strengthen efforts to stop the production and trafficking of illegal fentanyl and to determine how the scourge has affected Canadian communities.

Some common themes have emerged:

First, strong domestic and cross-border collaboration is happening and being improved. Myriad fora exist for such collaboration, with more being stood-up.

Second is the overwhelming scale and scope of the crisis. Thousands of Canadians have died due to fentanyl and other synthetic opioid overdoses, while the criminals driving this crisis continue to adapt quickly and in increasingly complex ways to carry out their trade.

Third, there is no single solution. Addressing the 'supply side'—through border measures, stronger law enforcement, and action against organized crime—must go hand in hand with efforts to reduce demand, such as enhanced awareness campaigns, protecting people from exposure to fentanyl, and supporting those to emerge and recover from addiction.

Fourth, an effective response to fentanyl must be grounded in evidence and supported by reliable, up-to-date data.

Still, while some commonalities were identified, the complexity and range of views related to how to respond to the fentanyl issue emerged. These varied perspectives have been gathered and are represented throughout this report.



Who We Heard From

Frontline Health and Community Workers : Experts, academics and frontline service providers who offer treatment and recovery and support to individuals affected by fentanyl use, and those focused on reducing harm, provided their insights. These national and local healthcare professionals and support organizations are addressing both the supply and demand sides of this crisis, helping to inform policy decisions, improving access to treatment, and enhancing public awareness and prevention efforts.

Law Enforcement Agencies / Frontline Personnel: Frontline police leaders, operations personnel and associations from several police services across the country who see the fentanyl crisis firsthand, and play a crucial role in keeping fentanyl, its precursors and other dangerous narcotics off our streets.

Financial Institutions: Public and private sector financial stakeholders who provide their insights on the financial elements of this illicit trade as well as the strengths and weaknesses of Canada's anti-money laundering regime. This sector plays an important role with respect to the detection of illicit money exploiting traditional financial systems. As the primary gatekeepers of the financial system, the efforts of these institutions in combatting money laundering are central to this fight.

Global Supply Chain Intermediaries: Officials from port authorities, postal services and private couriers who provided their firsthand knowledge of the state of play in this critical vector for fentanyl trafficking. Organized crime groups and individuals exploit private sector global supply chains and cargo shippers to traffic illicit drugs and unregulated precursors.

Provinces, Territories and Municipalities: Provincial, Territorial and Municipal (PTM) authorities are the primary providers in the delivery of health services to their citizens, including treatment and harm reduction services, along with law enforcement and prosecution.

Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous leaders and individuals provided insight into their role in the delivery of health services to their communities, including treatment and harm reduction services, along with law enforcement, in the face of this deadly scourge. Indigenous populations face greater risks of experiencing mental health challenges and substance use, lower life expectancy, and have been disproportionately impacted by substance use harms and the overdose crisis.

United States Counterparts: Senior government officials and elected representatives (e.g. Governors, Members of Congress, Members of the U.S. Senate and diplomatic officers) provided their perspectives as key partners in continental security, where Canada and the U.S. have shared interests and challenges when it comes to fentanyl.



What We Heard

Canada-U.S. bilateral context

The U.S. is facing an acute fentanyl emergency and has made this a national security matter and a bilateral issue requiring attention with Canada and Mexico. It has been a bilateral priority between Canada and the U.S. for some time. Canada has demonstrated its strong commitment to working with U.S. partners, for example, by signing the Canada-U.S. Overdose Action Plan and by striking the Trilateral Fentanyl Committee in 2023. In February 2025, the U.S. issued tariffs against Canada, under the stated rationale that the flow of fentanyl and other illicit drugs across its Northern Border was a factor in the public health crisis.

While Canada is working diligently to seek both domestic and international solutions to reduce the flow of illicit fentanyl to zero, it is important to put this issue in context. The volumes of fentanyl moving from Canada into the U.S. are negligible – based on U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) data since 2022 about one tenth of one percent¹ of fentanyl seizures are attributed to the Northern U.S. Border or crossing into the U.S. from Canada. These volumes are far less than the flow of illegal narcotics into Canada from the U.S.

We heard from several U.S. counterparts

They told us:

- Canada-U.S. collaboration on the border is strong, and there are areas for improvement. The many actions Canada has taken have been welcomed by the U.S. and generally seen as building on the strong operational coordination that is already in place.
 - Canadian and U.S. officials see opportunities to deepen collaboration on disrupting the illegal fentanyl trade. For example, the proposed Strike Force, could enhance information and intelligence sharing to enhance targeted enforcement actions.
 - Officials are working closely with the Office of National Drug Control Policy and Department of Homeland Security (among others) to inform approaches to address the issue.

¹ [Drug Seizure Statistics | U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#)



- Addressing fentanyl trafficking through inexpensive mail or courier shipments was highlighted as a shared challenge; it was recommended that cooperation with postal and courier services should continue in earnest, including the exploration of additional inspections of U.S.-bound commercial shipments. Canada and the U.S. see engagement with other countries on precursors as a priority area of further cooperation.
- Canada's ongoing work to enhance drug lab capabilities to analyze illegal drug samples and identify where and how these drugs are manufactured will support bilateral efforts to trace fentanyl origins, monitor variants and better target organized crime.





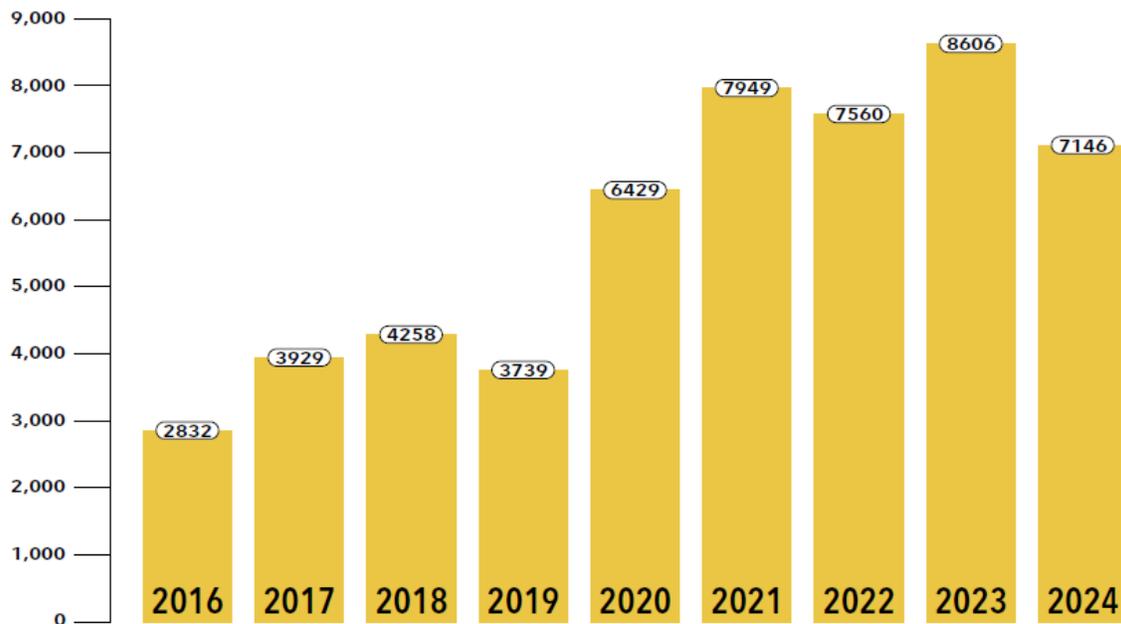
Domestic context

While much of the emphasis has been on the US, Canada is facing its own fentanyl crisis with an average of 20 Canadians dying each day. This is because fentanyl is a deadlier drug than any that came before it. This synthetic opioid is highly potent, cheap to make, easy to ship and can be produced anywhere. Illicit fentanyl is:

- 20 to 40 times more potent than heroin;
- 100 times more potent than morphine;
- Capable of killing with just a tiny 2mg dose, equivalent to five to seven grains of salt;
- Is increasingly being adulterated with other highly potent synthetics like xylazine and nitazenes, and being mixed with other drugs such as heroin and cocaine and ingested unknowingly; and
- Found in counterfeit pills disguised to look like prescription drugs.

Between January 2016 and December 2024, 52,544 apparent opioid toxicity deaths were reported in Canada, with significant increases coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. Of all accidental apparent opioid toxicity deaths in Canada between January to December 2024, 74% involved fentanyl.

Number of total apparent opioid toxicity deaths in Canada, 2016 to 2024



Source : www.health-infobase.canada.ca



We heard from healthcare, addiction, mental health and frontline support providers

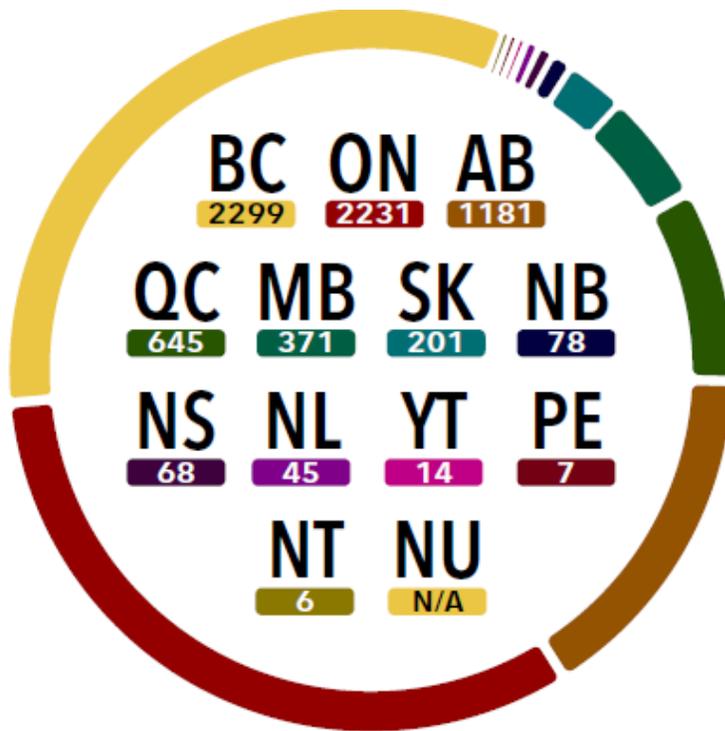
They told us:

- Governments at all levels, together with community partners, have taken varying degrees of action to address the opioid crisis through policies, investments, and programs. However, the landscape is constantly shifting, and responses must keep pace. Alberta's Recovery Model² is notable as a comprehensive approach.
- There is no one-size-fits-all solution: flexible, tailored approaches are essential; local realities require local solutions. Provinces and Territories have the jurisdiction to advance these uniquely local approaches.
- Access to timely, affordable treatment remains a challenge. Long waitlists and stigma prevent many from getting help, while healthcare providers face burnout and limited resources. Capacity and resourcing are critical requirements for recovery-focused systems.
- Evidence-based drug policies that integrate public health and public safety should consider ways to eradicate illegal supply and prevent drug use before it starts.
- As patterns of substance use evolve, the best strategies are flexible as adaptability is key. Meaningful engagement with families and communities is also vital.
- To address demand, balanced responses that integrate prevention, harm reduction, mental health support, treatment options, and awareness campaigns can enable more comprehensive, person-centered support.
- Rates and impacts of fentanyl and opioid use differ greatly across regions, communities, and individuals. From occasional use to chronic addiction, the crisis takes many forms. People recently released from a correctional facility, Indigenous peoples, and workers in physically demanding jobs are also disproportionately impacted.

² <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-recovery-oriented-system-of-care>



Number of total apparent opioid toxicity deaths by province/territory in 2024



Notes:

- British Columbia data includes deaths related to all unregulated drugs including, but not limited to, opioids and stimulants.
- Quebec data includes deaths related to all drug or opioid intoxications including, but not limited to, opioids and stimulants.

Source: PHAC

We heard from Canadian law enforcement leaders, officers and associations

They told us:

- Fentanyl comes to Canada through the illegal importation of both the finished drug and precursors that are used to produce fentanyl domestically. China is a significant source of precursor chemicals, many of which have legitimate uses but are being diverted by organized crime groups who produce fentanyl.
- Real progress is being made in the fight against fentanyl, but the challenge is that some laws must be amended and adapted to respond to the rapidly evolving challenges of the drug trade if national and economic security threats are to be adequately addressed.
 - On June 4, 2025, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police stated that the tabling of Bill C-2 (*Strong Borders Act*) “demonstrates a commitment to modernizing legislation and equipping law enforcement with necessary tools to combat transnational organized crime in an increasingly complex threat environment.”
- As it stands, balancing the privacy protections of Canadians with the need to share authorized information between domestic law enforcement agencies can be challenging and often an impediment to prosecution- but the balance must be preserved.
 - This is especially true of law enforcement access to information and transborder data that will help combat transnational crime and fentanyl.
- Criminal investigations and prosecutions for drug trafficking, money laundering and organized crime are very complex, often lengthy, resource intensive and require coordination across multiple agencies and jurisdictions, leaving law enforcement agencies to make difficult choices on which cases to pursue based on criminal risks, operational requirements, available resources, and likelihood of conviction.
- Converting lawfully acquired intelligence into court admissible evidence at times poses challenges and can deter investigations or hamper convictions.





We heard from financial institutions, banking associations and government stakeholders responsible for countering money-laundering and financial crimes

They told us:

- More tools and stronger penalties for financial crimes would enhance Canada's anti-money laundering (AML) enforcement framework.
 - Note that Bill C-2 (*Strong Borders Act*) contains a number of key AML provisions.
- These crimes are very complex and increasingly sophisticated, lawmakers and enforcement bodies at all levels would benefit from increased and specialized knowledge.
- Actioning best practices identified in previous AML studies that examined the jurisdictional and enforcement complexities among the different levels of government and best practices internationally could help eliminate criminal exploitation opportunities.
- While Canada and the U.S. face similar legal challenges, the American AML regime is seen as more responsive with greater penalties.
- A more strategic coordination model based on more strategic information sharing among public and private financial partners to tackle AML priorities in Canada would allow regime partners to have more cohesive working relationships with personnel from other departments.



We heard from supply chain intermediaries, such as shippers, couriers, Canada Post and Port Authorities

They told us:

- The complexity and volume of global trade—particularly with the rise of e-commerce—poses challenges in distinguishing legal goods from illicit ones. Unregulated materials legally imported in bulk can be difficult to flag and seize without targeted intelligence.
- Balancing security with the need to keep trade flowing is essential for Canada’s economic health. Targeted screening and intelligence-sharing can help identify risks without disrupting legitimate commerce.
- Because fentanyl is so potent and can be packaged in small physical quantities, it can be concealed and shipped inexpensively by mail or courier.
- Supply chain partners are eager to collaborate but need clearer legal authorities, modern tools, and well-defined information sharing strategies to contribute effectively.
- Advanced technology and data analytics can help identify threats more efficiently and enhance national security.
 - As volumes grow, Canada’s Port Authorities play an increasing frontline role in marine security. Increased integration with federal enforcement efforts is a potential avenue for consideration to enhance Canada’s ability to detect and disrupt marine-based smuggling.



International context

The illegal fentanyl trade is a highly lucrative global activity that transcends borders and jurisdictions with supply chains, production and trade that are international in scope. The production cycle begins with precursor chemicals made abroad, and then acquired and processed into fentanyl by organized crime groups in North America.

Several countries in Asia, and the Americas, including the U.S. and Mexico, are regularly used as trans-shipment routes to facilitate the entry to Canada of precursor chemicals that are then used in domestic production. Most of the large seizures of fentanyl in Canada can be linked to domestic production that arise from illegally imported or diverted precursor chemicals.

We heard from international representatives, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

They told us:

- The global trade in fentanyl and precursors is carried out by transnational organized crime groups, including Cartels based in Mexico.
- Criminals buy precursors from manufacturers in Asia and traffic them into North America disguised as commercial cargo.
- They trade and transport the chemicals and drugs through established, south-to-north routes by car and truck.
- Fentanyl is cheaper for criminals to manufacture than other opioids, which has led to a rise in purity on the street.
- Transnational criminal networks generate huge profits from the distribution of fentanyl, which:
 - once laundered, fund reinvestments in their production capacity and trafficking operations; and
 - lead to a cycle of more criminal activities, more money laundering, and other financial crimes.



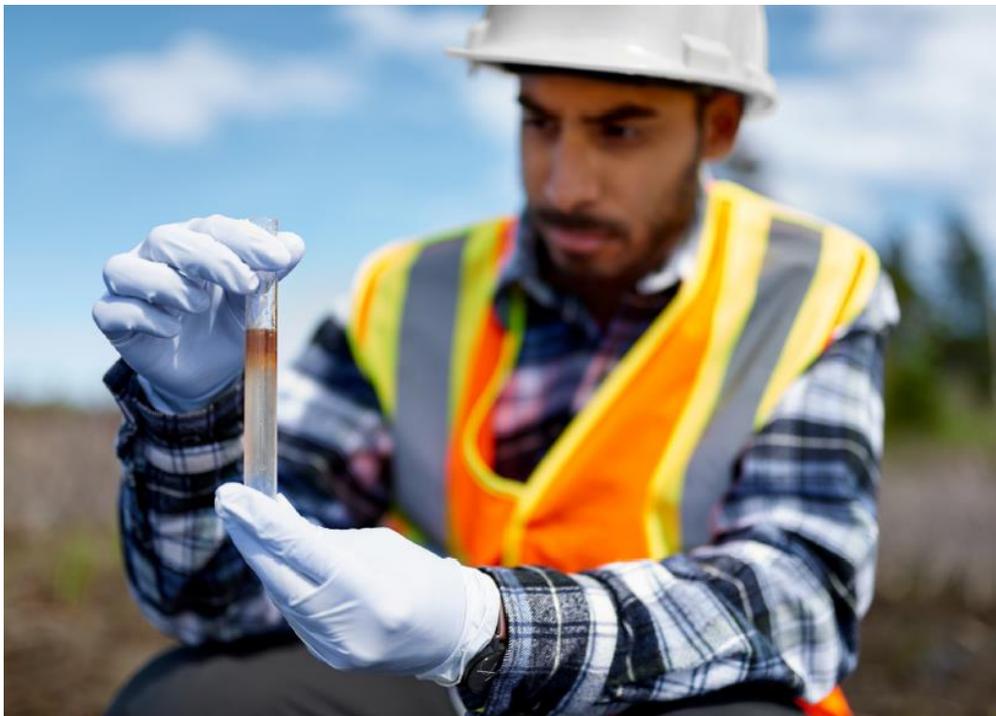
Harnessing data and evidence

Enhanced data and evidence collection can provide real-time analysis of the ever-changing fentanyl markets and allow a systematic analysis of the impact of our collective actions, which can be used to inform policies and decision-making.

Enhanced data and evidence help evaluate the effectiveness of measures to combat addiction, reduce overdoses and save lives. Leveraging reliable data also help us monitor the border to stop the spread of fentanyl by ensuring trafficking levels of it remain near zero.

This can be achieved through a range of accepted and emerging indicators. For example, techniques such as wastewater testing. If collected consistently, frequently and comprehensively across Canada, it can provide an early warning of fentanyl entering new parts of the country. Separately, tracing techniques in laboratories can identify the origins of samples, giving law enforcement important insight into possible distribution channels, patterns of usage and new variations in drug composition.

Both quantitative and qualitative data can underscore how we measure success and outcomes of intervention strategies, and the geographic and demographic realities on the ground.





Update on what is being done and results

Strong Borders Act

Protecting our sovereignty and keeping Canadians safe is one of the Government of Canada's core functions. A strong border both ensures our economic stability and contributes to our public safety by preventing the entry of illegal drugs, weapons, and individuals who may pose a threat to national security.

The suite of legislative measures in the *Strong Borders Act* (Bill C-2) tabled June 3, 2025 advances the Border Plan and supports public safety-related priorities to further secure the border and protect Canadians. The *Act* features new tools to help combat illegal migration, the illicit fentanyl trade, transnational organized crime, money laundering and terrorist financing.

Modernizing our laws to address national and economic security threats and respond to ever evolving challenges will protect Canadians and make Canada a tougher place for transnational organized crime to operate and profit from the illicit fentanyl trade.

Expanded Plan to Strengthen Border Security

Invested \$1.3 B in a comprehensive Border Plan with more to come.

- 24/7 Border Surveillance;
 - The RCMP strengthened its 24/7 surveillance capabilities by deploying:
 - 3 Black Hawk helicopters, 60 Tactical Mission Drones, 40 operational drones from CAF, modern cell site simulator units, full satellite coverage using RADARSAT Constellation Mission. Additional surveillance and counter-drone assets are being procured.

Listed Transnational Criminal Organizations

- On February 20, 2025, Canada listed seven Transnational and Organized Crime groups as terrorist entities under the Criminal Code.³

³ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/news/2025/02/government-of-canada-lists-seven-transnational-criminal-organizations-as-terrorist-entities.html>



Supported by \$200M, launched a focused intelligence sharing cell with Canadian intelligence agencies, RCMP, CBSA, FINTRAC and other key players

- \$180M to the Communications Security Establishment Canada and \$20M to Public Safety to establish the Joint Operational Intelligence Cell to better leverage information sharing to target transnational organized crime, money laundering, drug trafficking and improve border security.⁴

Detecting and Disrupting the Fentanyl Trade

Providing New Tools for CBSA Frontlines

- The CBSA procured frontline tools such as imaging and chemical detection tools and technologies at high-risk ports of entry, detector dogs (in addition to 80+ detector dog teams located at various POEs across Canada), and increased efforts at the National Targeting Centre.

Creating New Drug Analysis Centers

- Preliminary testing (method development and validation) in the new Drug Analysis Centres in Vancouver and Toronto is underway, while the Centre is expected to be fully operational by 2026. We are working with international partners to provide analyst training, discuss data sharing, aligning Canada with the technical methodology of U.S.

Regulating Precursors

- Health Canada established a new Precursor Chemical Risk Management Unit.
- Earlier this spring, Health Canada rapidly scheduled three fentanyl precursors of concern. Temporary controls for these three precursors are now in place. Last January, Health Canada published a Notice of Intent to support regulatory amendments to provide further oversight of precursor chemical and drug equipment. These proposed regulatory amendments were published in June 2025 for public consultation.
- Through the *Strong Borders Act*, amendments to the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* are also being proposed to create a new accelerated scheduling pathway to rapidly control precursor chemicals, which will in turn further enhance our ability to respond to emerging drug threats.

⁴ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/news/2025/03/launch-of-the-joint-operational-intelligence-cell.html>



Introducing Significant New Tools for Law Enforcement

Increase information sharing through a novel intelligence sharing model with financial institutions

- Established the Integrated Money Laundering Intelligence Partnership (IMLIP) to facilitate information sharing related to money laundering and organized crime activities across a core group of federal departments and large banking institutions.⁵
- Terms of reference have been ratified and Finance Canada developed a legislative proposal to mitigate the risk associated with information sharing among financial institutions.

Combat Trade-Based Money Laundering (TBML)

- Trade Transparency Unit (TTU) established within CBSA. CBSA finalizing MOU with U.S. to enable sharing of bulk trade data to detect and deter cross-border TBML and other crimes.

Enhancing Operational Coordination

North American Joint Strike Force

- New binational teams co-chaired by RCMP and DEA, include enforcement, border security, and intelligence professionals across Canada and the U.S. targeting fentanyl production and trade, including precursor chemicals through joint efforts.

Regional Enforcement Hubs

- Two regional enforcement hubs as components of the Strike Force will be established: the Regional Integrated Synthetic Enforcement Teams (R-ISETs) and the Regional Integrated Drug Enforcement Teams (RIDETs).
- R-ISETs, led by RCMP, have a mandate for domestic disruption of transnational crime networks and actors, focused on curbing the flow of fentanyl and precursors, with four teams operating in Ontario, Québec, Alberta and British Columbia.

⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2025/02/government-launches-new-intelligence-sharing-partnership-focused-on-fentanyl-trafficking-and-other-criminal-use-of-funds.html>



- RIDETs, led by PS, to establish unique PT teams to fight organized drug crime in parts of the country that are experiencing high levels of production and trafficking activity, similar to the U.S DEA's High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program⁶. Proposals submitted by Ontario, Québec, Alberta and British Columbia to date.

Increasing Information Sharing

Establish a High-Risk Child Sex Offender Database Act (HRCSODA)

- Effective December 31, 2024, the HRCSODA requires the RCMP to establish and administer a publicly accessible centralized database with information on individuals who have been convicted of sexual offences against a child and who pose a high risk of committing crimes of a sexual nature.
- Consultations with PTs to determine processes are ongoing; completion is targeted for late 2025.

Expand and enhance immigration information-sharing between Canada and the US.

- Effective January 17, regulatory changes to the Agreement between Canada and the U.S. for the Sharing of Visa and Immigration Information implemented to facilitate the automated exchange of biographical and biometric information of permanent residents of both countries. Upon establishment of the necessary systems, information will only be exchanged per request during either country's immigration screening process, such as during a visa application.

Minimizing Unnecessary Border Volumes

Eliminated “Flagpoling”

- The CBSA has ended the practice of flagpoling.
- Reduced cost burden of removing inadmissible people from Canada.
- As of April 1, 2025, new measures in place to reduce cost of removing inadmissible individuals from Canada by increasing the fees these individuals must pay to return.

⁶ <https://www.dea.gov/operations/hidta>



Increase the Rate of Removals for Inadmissible People

- Government of Canada provided funding for the CBSA to increase the rate at which it removes inadmissible people from Canada. Priority for removals are based on safety and security grounds, including national security, organized crime, crimes against humanity.
- CBSA removed over 18,000 inadmissible people in 2024-25. The CBSA has committed to increasing the number of removals to 20,000 for the next two fiscal years.

More investments to come

- Add 1000 new personnel for each of the CBSA and the RCMP.
- Investment in the Public Prosecution Service of Canada to enable it to prosecute more complex drug trafficking and organized crime offences.
- Additional border scanners, drones, and new K-9 teams to target more suspicious shipments at land borders, ports, and railyards.



Conclusion

The various views shared in this report, reveal combatting fentanyl epidemic is an extremely complex issue. There is no silver bullet. It requires many and differing actions from all levels - from grassroots initiatives at the local level right up to and including Federal actions – and multiple organizations, agencies, individuals, from financial institutions to health officials, from ports to policing.

To facilitate this, much has been and is being done. The Government of Canada tabled the *Strong Borders Act* and has taken and is taking additional measures including enhancing personnel for the CBSA and RCMP and other investments. In concert with numerous others, the Czar will continue driving integration of this work and engaging with key stakeholders to confront this issue and deliver solutions for Canadians that both crack down on the supply of fentanyl while also mitigating the harms it brings.

Canada is well-positioned and determined to maintain the momentum needed to defeat this scourge impacting our communities and so many families. As this crisis evolves, we will not waver, and our actions and responses will resolutely follow suit.