



'IT TOOK
16 HOURS'

Studying health
care reviews **NP1**



Opioid-related EMS calls spike in 2025

Edmonton the 'hottest spot' for rates of overdose, mortality events: expert

CINDY TRAN

Alberta's toxic drug supply is putting a strain on the system, with the province seeing a record number of emergency medical services (EMS) responses to opioid-related events in 2025.

Dr. Monty Ghosh, an addictions physician and associate professor at the

University of Alberta, said he's seen a shift in Edmonton and Calgary's drug supplies, which are constantly evolving. He said the presence of new substances such as cychlorphine, part of a new class of opioids called orphines which can be up to 10 times more potent than fentanyl, makes it more difficult to treat patients.

"We're constantly evolving our protocols. We're trialling and erroring a bunch of different protocols because we don't know what protocol is right and what's not," Ghosh said.

"We're doing medicine on the fly, in some respects, to manage and mitigate some of these concerns."

Ghosh said health care-professionals will often treat an individual for multiple substance withdrawals instead of just one — each withdrawal has its own protocol — which is especially difficult to manage when it

comes to outpatient-based settings.

In 2025, EMS responded to 10,562 opioid-related incidents across Alberta — the highest to date. Edmonton made up nearly 70 per cent of those responses.

Ghosh said it is important to note the drug supplies differ in each jurisdiction. While both of Alberta's major cities are seeing similar drugs, Edmonton has become the "hottest spot" in Canada when it comes to overdose rates and mortality events, he said.

SEE OPIOIDS ON **A4**



SHAUGHN BUTTS

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

The Edmonton Kennel Club's summer show runs through Sunday at the Whitemud Equine Centre. The event includes four all-breed conformation shows, three obedience trials and six rally obedience trials. For more information, visit edmontonkennelclub.ab.ca.

Residents asked to help track monarch butterflies

JACKIE CARMICHAEL

For a creature that weighs as much as a paper clip, one of the world's tiniest and most determined migrants is literally the ultimate social butterfly — and wildlife researchers are hoping Edmontonians will help GPS track its path.

Currently fluttering around the northernmost edge of its range around Edmonton, the Monarch butterfly is a matter of great fascination for James Page, species at risk and biodiversity specialist with the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

He's hoping wildlife enthusiasts will get out now through Sunday to snap photos of the orange and black beauties and their incubator and nursery buddy — milkweed plants — for the 10th anniversary of the International Monarch Monitoring Blitz.

"The monarch is probably the most recognizable butterfly across North America, but most people don't recognize the threats they face from habitat loss. The International Monarch Monitoring Blitz is an opportunity for people of all ages to help protect them from extinction by collecting valuable information on monarchs and the milkweed they rely on," Page told Postmedia.

Some 300,000 people across Canada are recording all kinds of wildlife with the iNaturalist app, Page said, adding Edmonton's a bit of a challenge because there aren't any monarch observations on iNaturalist this summer, but there were in the past.

SEE MONARCHS ON **A2**

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