

Dear HAMSMaRT and Keeping Six Supporters,

March was a hard month for us here at HAMSMaRT. As we thaw from the winter, we remember all the clients, friends, and community members that we have lost over the last few months. We remember their names, we support their families, and we continue to advocate for ongoing policy change to try and ensure these deaths do not keep occurring.

This newsletter will feature as usual, two new staff members, one from HAMSMaRT and one from K6, as well as the usual point of care testing dates, and donation requests. We also have some new changes! We have a new Instagram account and a new collaboration that has allowed us to expand our point of care testing availability!

As the days start to warm up and we now have more sunlight in the evening, I encourage you to reflect on what this winter brought to your neighbours who are unhoused and take a moment for those whose lives were lost. Part of this newsletter will also provide updates on new provincial policy and how you can best advocate for the most vulnerable in our community.

In solidarity,  
HAMSMaRT & K6

## Follow Us on Instagram!

HAMSMaRT is finally on Instagram! While these monthly newsletters are great to keep you updated on the bigger changes, you can find our weekly antics on Instagram. Special thank you to our group of McMaster Social Work students who have taken this on! More on them and the great work they have been doing in a future newsletter!

Click Me to Follow!



**hamsmart\_**

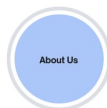
HAMSMaRT

11 posts 70 followers 61 following

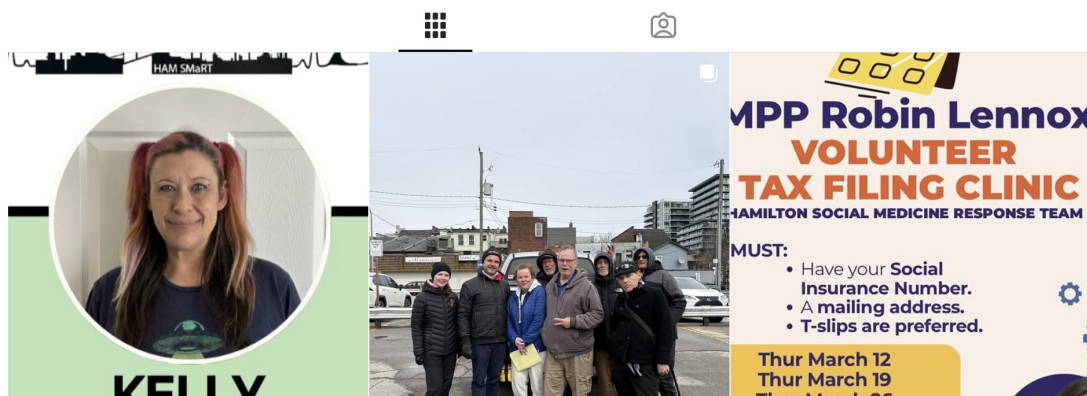
Hamilton Social Medicine Response Team  
660 Main St E... more



Donations



About Us



## April Point Of Care Testing Dates

Next month the Shelter Health Hep C Team will be onsite to test for Hep C, Syphilis, and HIV on:

Tuesday April 7, 1-3pm  
Thursday April 23, 1-3pm



## New Availability for HIV/Syphilis Point of Care Testing

Through a collaboration with McMaster's [Program for Substance Use in Pregnancy \(PROSPR\)](#) we are happy to announce that there will be HIV and Syphilis point of care testing for anyone who requests it at anytime during our operating hours. PROSPR has graciously provided both HAMSMaRT nurses, Pri and Matt, with the training required to preform these tests as well as a supply of the test kits themselves. Note that this testing does not include Hep C results. This collaboration is part of the knowledge mobilization strategy that emerged out of recent research that researchers at PROSPR (including our very own Dr. Turner) have conducted, with the goal being to increased access to syphilis testing. Thank you McMaster University and PROSPR staff for making this possible and continuing to break down barriers to healthcare in our community!

## Provincial Policy Update and Advocacy

If you recall, in our June 2025 Newsletter we spoke about the Ontario PC government passing [Bill 223](#), effectively closing all Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS) sites that resided within 200 m of a school or daycare, with no option to relocate. This resulted in 10 out of 17 CTS sites across the province closing. People with lived experience and advocates like social workers, nurses, and physicians protested these closures, letting the government know that this would result in displacement, loss of health and social service access, and death. Almost a year later, this continues to be true, with [Hamilton consistently breaking its own records](#) for EMS calls and overdose deaths. Now, the provincial [PC's are cutting all funding to all the sites](#) that still exist, further choosing actions that will cause death. The government-funded Homeless and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs that were supposed to replace the CTS have been slow to open, with many not even yet open - including Hamilton's HART Hub ([set to open in May](#)). Closing the remaining CTS sites around the province will continue to result in further harm and death. We are tired of seeing our community suffer and die needlessly as the government continues to make choices that are ideological and not evidence-based.

So, what can we do? Here are some actionable items you can do to help add your voice to the advocates and peers that are demanding change.

- Call your [local MPP](#)
  - Report overdoses in your community
  - Demand for change in your local areas, pay attention to how this crisis affects the community spaces around you - for example, [the library](#).
  - Ask if they have petitions you can sign
  - If they do not have petitions you can start one, with or without the support of your MPP
- Reach out to your local Harm Reduction organizations
  - Participate in local protests and advocacy efforts
  - Ask what they need and donate - time, money, goods, and skills
- Vote in your local elections, and pay attention to your local news, keeping up to date with the implementation of [Bill 223 and Bill 6](#) in your communities

## Staff Spotlight

Each month do a staff spotlight! We would like to recognize the folks in both HAMSMaRT and K6 that do hard work for our Hamilton community everyday. **We have asked them about why they joined HAMSMaRT/K6, what other work they do outside of here, and any hobbies they may have!** Every month you can find a new spotlight on a HAMSMaRT and K6 staff member or volunteer. We hope you enjoy getting to know the people behind the scenes here at our partnered organizations!

K6 | Kelly Rattray



Kelly started working at K6 in May 2022 and is the Outreach Coordinator! She joined K6 because of the unique way it provided supports to people who were under-housed or using substances. Kelly herself would like to share that she "came from that life" and now is in this to give back to others.

Outside of K6, Kelly works at the HUB's warming centre, does outreach in her spare time, and sits on local community boards for her neighbourhood. She was also a large part of the development of Hamilton's now overturned encampment protocol and its advocacy to city hall. Kelly has been a staple in her community and is often turned to for guidance.

In her spare time, Kelly has lots of hobbies that give her joy. She loves taking walks in nature, is up early to catch the sunrise, and collects treasures like sea glass and gems - a hobby known as rockhounding! She also loves coffee, doing crafts, and spending time with her kid. She is currently in recovery, active in a 12 step program, and tries to live each day to its fullest.

### HAMSMaRT | Lorna Fothergill

Lorna has been with HAMSMaRT since September 2023 and she is our Finance Manager! She is a major part of our operational systems, managing everything from payroll to donor updates. She keeps an eye on where our money goes and helps us stay on budget.

Lorna works part-time for HAMSMaRT and is otherwise semi-retired. She retired from her full time job, heading up the Accounting department at Holstein Canada, a not-for-profit dairy company, in 2022. When she retired she always intended to go back to work part-time and found that HAMSMaRT was a good fit for her. We are lucky to have someone who has years of not-for-profit accounting experience behind her!

In her spare time, you can find Lorna outdoors hiking with her dog, Archie, snowmobiling, or just enjoying nature. She also loves to cook! Lorna is definitely doing semi-retirement right!



### Donate Now!

We encourage you to donate to HAMSMaRT and make a difference in your community. Your donations will be used to purchase food, medical supplies, hygiene products and toiletries, and other outreach and clinic supplies. **You can donate by clicking the button below.** You can sign up for a **one time donation or a monthly donation.** All donations to HAMSMaRT are tax deductible and you can request a donation letter from us for large amounts. We look forward to working with you to provide those in need with the great healthcare and daily living essentials that we all deserve!

[Donate Here](#)

We would like to acknowledge and thank our current primary funders: the Hamilton Community Foundation, Ontario HIV Treatment Network, the Karen & Peter Turkstra Family Foundation, Incite Foundation for the Arts, the Canadian Mental Health Association, James A. Burton & Family Foundation, and The Hainsworth Trust. Thank you and we hope to continue to nurture our partnerships together!

Additionally, we would like to thank the everyday folks who donate \$5, \$10, or \$15 through our website as a one time donation or a monthly donation. We know that making ends meet can be hard and we appreciate you giving

back to your community through us - in whatever way you can! However large or small, your continued donations have allowed us to keep supporting our clients and community members. It is because of you all that we are able to give people a safe place for their medical care and wrap-around needs. Thank you to all of our amazing donors!

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#### April Newsletter - What's Next?

On next month's newsletter you can expect from us:

- spotlight on a current research project!
- dates for March Hep C Testing - new month, new opportunities to test!
- meet two new staff members!

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**The Hamilton Social Medicine Response Team** (HAMSMaRT) is a nonprofit organization of health providers and community organizers working to integrate clinical practice, critical analysis and political action. We work to advance the idea and practice that health is inherently political and health care providers must play a role in bringing about change in the social and material conditions which determine health.



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