



2026 Spring DATAC Newsletter

Company Spotlight

A2Z Safety & Training

Product Spotlight

Alcovisor Jupiter

Industry Article

GLP-1s as addiction treatment

More Industry News

What we know about Kratom



Return-To-Duty
Infographic Series



Company Spotlight



A2Z SAFETY & TRAINING

Building Safety, Family, and Community in Saskatchewan

I chatted with Ashton Montgomery of **A2Z Safety & Training, an indigenously run business** in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan about how they have built a reputation as a trusted, family-run safety and drug testing company—one that’s grown and evolved alongside the industries it serves. What began in 2008 as a small safety training business has become a one-stop shop for training, safety services, and workplace drug and alcohol testing,

all while maintaining deep community roots and a strong sense of integrity.

Founded by **Trevor and Elizabeth Montgomery**, A2Z began with essential safety courses such as **H2S Alive and First Aid/CPR**, as well as **on-site medic standby services** throughout Alberta. As industry needs changed and the business grew, A2Z expanded its offerings to include a wider range of safety certifications—and eventually, drug and alcohol testing.

As Ashton explains, “We started in 2008, and as things shifted in the industry, more courses were added. Once we had enough trained people, drug testing became a viable service. My grandpa actually started with our drug testing, and I would go out on site to help him.”

That family-first approach continues today. What started as a small team of relatives has become a respected business known for professionalism, community involvement, and care for every client who walks through the door. Today, A2Z Safety & Training serves industries such as **mining, construction, and power infrastructure**—all safety-sensitive sectors with zero-tolerance policies for substance use. The company provides **7-panel and 12-panel express urine drug tests** as their main testing services, along with breath alcohol testing and, when requested, oral fluid testing. Collections can be completed in-house, though A2Z continues to provide on-site services as needed.

Over the past 13 years, A2Z has been a proud partner of **DATAAC** using our training and materials to maintain the highest standards in testing integrity and compliance.

“DATAAC has been a big player in our business,” Ashton shared. “Whether it’s training new people, getting updated materials, or recertifying, they’ve always been there for us. We started with DATAAC and have stuck with them ever since.” Beyond testing, A2Z prides itself on being a **“safety one-stop shop.”** Clients can get everything they need before heading to the job site—from **PPE and work boots to certifications and safety tickets.**

Beyond testing, A2Z prides itself on being a “**safety one-stop shop.**” Clients can get everything they need before heading to the job site—from **PPE and work boots to certifications and safety tickets.**

“**We like to think of ourselves as that place where people can get their drug testing, their training, and the equipment they need to be ready for work. When they leave here, they’re good to go.**”

This comprehensive approach has earned A2Z multiple awards, including the **Samuel McCoy Business Award** and over **ten consecutive “Best of the Best” awards for safety training** in the Prince Albert region.

When asked what advice they’d give to others starting out in the industry, A2Z’s message was simple—and wise:

“Patience. That’s the biggest thing. You have to be patient—with yourself, with the process, and with the people you’re testing. Whether it’s their first time or their fifth, people can be nervous. Things don’t always go as planned, but if you stick to your policies and procedures, you’ll always be doing the right thing.”

For A2Z, success isn’t just about growth—it’s about **credibility and respect.** Their philosophy is rooted in honesty and accountability: if a mistake happens, they address it, learn from it, and move forward. That commitment to doing things the right way—combined with their deep local ties and dedication to safety—has made A2Z a standout example of professionalism and integrity in Canada’s drug and alcohol testing community.

DATAc is proud to spotlight A2Z Safety & Training—an indigenous, family-driven business that continues to raise the standard for safety, service, and community in Saskatchewan.



Product Spotlight

Verify

DIAGNOSTICS

The Alcovisor® Jupiter offers unsurpassed convenience with its touchscreen technology, integrated keyboard, and built-in printer.



As a DOT NHTSA certified Evidential Breath Tester, it meets or exceeds US DOT specifications for workplace testing. Not just easy to use, but also reliable and accurate.

With its advanced features, including a positive air blank lock and 15-minute timer, the Jupiter helps to eliminate fatal flaws in the testing process, thereby reducing the number of cancelled tests.

Features & Benefits:

- 3.2" touch screen
- DOT approved Evidential Breath Tester (EBT)
- Integrated thermal printer
- GPS module records location of each test
- Input test data with included stylus with no external keyboard
- Mouthpiece ejector button
- Records last 20,000 tests in memory
- LED light guides mouthpiece insertion
- Rechargeable lithium battery

Jupiter kit includes:

- Alcovisor Jupiter EBT
- Rugged plastic case
- Leather pouch with belt loop
- Lithium rechargeable battery x 2
- Battery charger for batteries with AC and car power adapters
- Printer paper rolls x 6
- Mouthpieces x 105
- Screening Cup x 1
- Instruction manual
- 34 L Dry Gas Cylinder + Regulator
- 100 ea DOT & N-DOT Forms
- Tamper Evident Tape x 2 rolls

**TO LEARN MORE, CALL VERIFY
DIAGNOSTICS (866) 446-2953**



Industry News Article

GLP-1 agonists and addiction treatment: 5 things to know



A recent article published by the Stanford Report and authored by Mark Conley examined what research has revealed so far about the potential role of GLP-1 receptor agonist drugs in treating addiction disorders. In addition, the article features an interview with Dr. Anna Lembke, a professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences at Stanford Medicine, who shared her expertise on the subject. GLP-1 (glucagon-like peptide-1) agonists are a class of medications that imitate a natural hormone released by the small intestine after eating. They work by slowing gastric emptying and enhancing insulin secretion, which helps increase satiety and reduce appetite.

In the U.S., GLP-1 receptor agonists are FDA-approved to improve glycemic control in adults with type 2 diabetes, to promote chronic

weight management in people with obesity or overweight plus comorbidities, and, notably since March 2024, to reduce the risk of major cardiovascular events in adults with cardiovascular disease who are obese or overweight.

While GLP-1 receptor agonists were originally developed for type 2 diabetes, recent research has been uncovering their potential in treating various forms of addiction, as they act on both metabolic and neurological pathways, including the brain's reward system. According to Dr. Lembke, here are the five main takeaways regarding the potential of GLP-1 drugs in addiction treatment.

1. GLP-1s may help to treat food addiction

Although food addiction isn't formally recognized in the DSM-5, many health experts have acknowledged its gravity. GLP-1 medications, including Ozempic, have been demonstrated to reduce obsessive food thoughts and help some individuals manage compulsive eating. However, the effect may wear off once the medication is stopped, and access is often limited due to insurance restrictions. "Anecdotally, people with food addiction who find GLP-1s helpful in this regard talk about how the medication turns down the volume of 'food noise' in the brain, by which they mean the constant thoughts and cravings for certain types of food," Dr. Lembke said.

2. GLP-1s act on the brain's dopamine reward system

In addition, it has been found that GLP-1s influence dopamine pathways involved in motivation and reward, which are mechanisms central to addiction. These pathways are a promising target for addiction therapies, as they may help modulate cravings and compulsive behaviours.

3. GLP-1s may help to treat multiple addictions

Early research suggests GLP-1s may reduce cravings and harmful behaviours not only for food, but also for substances including opioids, alcohol, and nicotine. So far, some preliminary and small studies have shown reduced overdose and intoxication rates. In fact, researchers are now examining whether these drugs can also help people who are addicted to gambling, sex, and shopping. "These molecules demonstrate exciting early promise in stemming the rising tide of addictive disorders," Dr. Lembke said. "But we still need more evidence, including longer-term studies."

4. GLP-1s don't work for everyone

So far, research has also shown that individual responses to GLP-1 treatments may vary. Some patients benefit from them significantly, while others see little effect. In addition, there are also some side effects, which range from mild (such as nausea and headaches) to rare but serious ones (including pancreatitis and thyroid cancer), which can also impact suitability. "Interindividual variability in response to medications to treat addiction has always been true and will continue to be true with GLP-1s," Dr. Lembke said. "It's too early to know whether using GLP-1s to treat addiction comes with additional side effects."

5. Addiction experts need more treatment options

While addiction disorders affect 48 million Americans, there are currently few FDA-approved medications for them. While GLP-1s potentially offer a powerful new tool for treatment providers, further research is needed to confirm their long-term safety and effectiveness in this context. "In order to adapt to this environment, we need all the tools we can find," Dr. Lembke said. "It's the reality of the world we live in now."



Industry News Article

10 years of deflection and rethinking drug response



In September 2015, an issue of the Police Chief Magazine introduced the term “deflection” to the U.S. law enforcement and justice community. This term refers to a policing approach that redirects people with substance use issues toward treatment and community services before they formally enter the criminal justice system.

Over the past decade, deflection also expanded into the domains of public health, drug treatment, and recovery, and even gained international traction. A recent article published by the Police Chief Magazine and authored by Jac Charlier, Executive Director of the Center for Health and Justice, TASC, and Jason Kew, of the UK Centre for Justice Innovation, discussed the evolution of deflection as a policing model and highlighted the lessons learned so far.

According to the authors, the word “deflection” has persisted over the last decade because it clearly distinguishes this approach from “diversion.”

Specifically, diversion occurs after someone has entered the justice system, but deflection happens earlier, redirecting individuals to community-based services before an arrest or charge is made. When it was first introduced, deflection created a new shift in policing by moving beyond traditional justice-system diversion, to a model where police partnered directly with community, treatment, and recovery services.

“Another aspect of deflection that easily could be overlooked yet deserves to be acknowledged for the tremendous innovation that it represents is this: deflection emerged not from the treatment or recovery movement, but from—almost exclusively at first—police, sheriffs, and other law enforcement agencies,” wrote the authors. “The birth of deflection was in large part, but not exclusively, a response to the overdose crisis, and the maxim that “we can’t arrest our way out of this” is due to the courage, willingness, and creativity of police, sheriffs, law enforcement, and prosecutors to seek alternative solutions.”

In the article, the authors also outlined 10 lessons learned from 10 years of deflection, which are summarized below.

1. Police-treatment partnerships work:

Deflection has shown that police and treatment providers can collaborate effectively, and create solutions that benefit both communities and individuals.

2. Police-recovery partnerships are important:

Officers and people in recovery can build trust and create partnerships that contribute to the success of deflection.

3. Communities support deflection:

Communities can embrace deflection as a practical response that addresses drug use while allowing police to focus on serious crime.

4. Deflection works:

According to evaluations, deflection reduces drug use, related crime, and improves recovery and community safety.

5. Deflection conforms to policing traditions:

It helps to address the underlying causes of crime through community collaboration.

6. Police want to help:

Officers gain meaning and hope by initiating pathways to recovery, even though they do not provide the treatment themselves.

7. Local design is essential:

Deflection is not a one-size-fits-all program but adapts uniquely to each community's needs and resources.

8. Deflection also strengthens policy:

Advocacy work by police, treatment, and communities creating stronger, evidence-based public policy.

9. Treatment systems face challenges:

While police can adapt quickly, treatment and recovery partners often need more support to work effectively with law enforcement.

10. Deflection is efficient:

Since it happens before arrest, it connects people early to treatment, housing, and recovery services, and prevents justice system involvement.

"Most important, the idea attached to the word deflection—this foundational change in how police and drug treatment work together, in and with the community—is no longer unusual, something not understood. Rather, the communities practicing it show that deflection can be done, and the field indeed is doing it!" concluded the authors.

In addition, deflection is now recognized by U.S. federal agencies, dozens of states, and other countries, with over 1,600 initiatives currently in place. All in all, deflection has proven effective, strengthened partnerships, influenced public policy, and is projected to continue growing as a key upstream strategy in public safety and public health.

Industry News Article

Kratom: Balancing the risk and benefits



Kratom is a herbal substance extracted from the leaves of the *Mitragyna speciosa* tree that is native to Southeast Asia, and can act as both a stimulant and an opioid-like depressant depending on the dose. Currently, kratom use is gaining popularity in Canada, it is legal to possess and consume it, though it is illegal to sell for ingestion or as a Natural Health Product. Though it is not currently controlled under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act it is illegal to sell, advertise or market kratom for any kind of human consumption.

THE MECHANISMS BEHIND KRATOM'S EFFECTS

Mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine are the main psychoactive compounds in kratom. At low doses, the substance produces psychostimulant effects, while at higher doses, it causes sedating, opioid-like effects. Moreover, the effects occur within 5 to 10 minutes after consuming kratom and last 2 to 5 hours. Kratom has opioid-like effects due to its partial agonism of opioid receptors and interacts with adrenergic and serotonergic receptors. Regular kratom use can lead to an opioid-like syndrome called kratom use disorder, causing withdrawal symptoms when decreasing or discontinuing use for a day or more.

"People report taking the drug for pain, anxiety, energy, or SUD," wrote Dr. Gold in an article he wrote about kratom in *Psychology Today* "They assume it must be safe if it has been used for centuries in Southeast Asia. Others believe the drug is safe because it comes from a plant. But dosages are difficult to calculate, packaging labels are useless, and some kratom sellers add many more psychoactive ingredients than kratom naturally possesses."

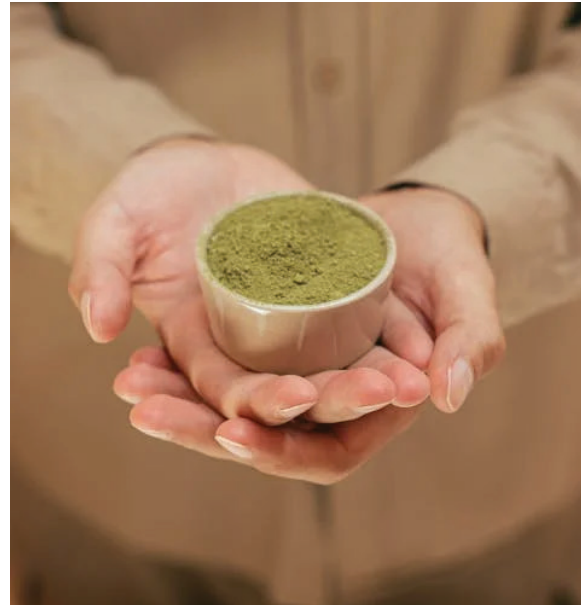
THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF KRATOM

In recent years, kratom has shown some effectiveness in opioid withdrawal support, and has also been used by individuals to ease withdrawal symptoms such as cravings, insomnia, and anxiety. In his interview with *Psychology Today*, Dr. Edward Boyer noted that kratom can be an important part of harm reduction efforts. "Patients with OUDs and no beds or no treatment slots available, or those outside of major cities, need help and help now," he said. "If you can't get into formal treatment right off the bat, using kratom tea as a bridge to treatment makes sense and is highly preferable to injecting heroin or taking opioid pills or fentanyl. I don't want people using kratom, but there is a role for kratom in helping people transition from use to MATs."



CONCERNS OVER LACK OF REGULATION

Natural kratom leaves contain only trace amounts of 7-hydroxymitragynine (0.01–0.04%), but some commercial products have been found to contain artificially elevated levels. Some U.S. health experts have raised concerns regarding the lack of kratom regulation, with the unregulated kratom market in the country currently being worth roughly \$1.5 billion. Furthermore, the Tampa Bay Times has reported more than 580 deaths in Florida from a kratom-involved overdose in the last 10 years. While most deaths involved other substances, 46 deaths were due to kratom alone. Kratom is also widely sold online and is promoted as a legal psychoactive product on websites, but experts warn that its use carries its own risk of addiction.



“As researchers...we strongly recommend that kratom in its native form (unadulterated fresh or dried leaf material) remain available to consumers. In addition, there must be thorough and proper oversight and regulation, including clear labeling that describes the amount of mitragynine per kratom dose, recommended maximum daily doses, potential for drug interactions, and implementation of proper Good Manufacturing Practices,” reads an editorial authored by Chris McCurdy and Oliver Grundman, professors at the University of Florida.

CONCERNS OVER LACK OF REGULATION

One Canadian research study concluded that individuals who seek information about kratom online are frequently exposed to poor quality and inaccurate consumer health information. Kratom is not authorized for sale by Health Canada, and many Canadian consumers have turned to online retailers to purchase kratom due to its easy accessibility online. “Those looking to purchase kratom online are not provided with the critical information necessary to make an informed decision regarding its use, such as the complete details about the risks and side effects or a description of how kratom affects the body,” concluded the study. “Given the growing interest in kratom, knowledge of the quality of information available can lead to improved dialogue between healthcare providers and patients.”

Return-to-Duty Process

How does the Clearinghouse fit into the RTD process?

LEGEND



Once a driver has a violation they are **no longer able to perform** safety sensitive duties.



The DOT requires employers to provide a list of DOT qualified SAPs. The driver is NOT required to pick their SAP from this list.



1

SAP Request Sent



2

SAP Designated



The designated SAP initially evaluates the driver.



3

Initial SAP Assessment Completed



The SAP provides recommendations for treatment and/or education. Once it has been completed by employee, the SAP reassess and establishes a follow-up testing plan if appropriate.



4

Driver Determined Eligible for RTD Test



The driver must be sent for an RTD test by their current employer.

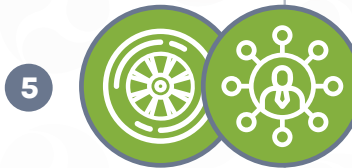


6

Follow-up Testing Plan Completed



The driver must be sent for an RTD test by his or her current employer.



5

RTD Test with Negative Result



The employee is able to return to safety sensitive duties once they have a negative RTD.

Thanks for reading!

If you would like more content like this, head over to [DATAC.ca](https://www.datac.ca) where we post frequent articles on the latest drug & alcohol testing news.

[DATAC.CA](https://www.datac.ca)

Are you certified in all areas of Canadian specimen collection, beyond split specimen lab testing?

If not, our courses will arm you with all of the knowledge you need to stay legally defensible and prepared for any testing situation.

[LEARN MORE](#)

1 (866) 324-7093

EFFECTIVE DATE 09JUL_24_V1.0