

Information Bulletin Report #5: VCH and PHC's response to the provincial illicit drug overdose emergency

VCH Surveillance Summary – November 2016

Fatal overdoses

- According to the BC Coroners Service, from January 1 to September 30, 2016 there were 555 overdose (OD) deaths due to illicit drug use across BC. Fentanyl was detected in 61% of them.
- 128 of the deaths occurred in Vancouver Coastal Health, including 110 in Vancouver, 6 in Powell River and 4 in North Vancouver.

Overdoses at VCH Urban Emergency Departments

- From January 1 to October 29, 2016 there were 5,008 illicit or unknown drug overdoses presenting to VCH urban emergency departments (ED). One quarter of them (1,275) were opioid related. 86% of them went to hospitals in Vancouver. The majority (71%) of them to St. Paul's Hospital.
- The substance isn't known for almost half (44%) of all presenting overdoses. When the substance was known the most commonly patient-reported substance was heroin (21%).
- The majority of overdoses occurred in males (69%) and those aged 19 to 59 years.
- Approximately 9% of overdose patients were admitted to hospital while 74% of patients were discharged from the ED and 17% left against medical advice.
- 47% were from Vancouver, 4% were from Richmond, 6% were from Coastal Urban, and 2% were from Coastal Rural. The majority of Vancouver residents (68%) were from City Centre and the Downtown Eastside.

Overdoses at VCH Rural Emergency Departments (no change)

- In VCH rural hospitals (Bella Cooola General Hospital, RW Large Memorial Hospital, Sechelt Hospital, and Powell River General Hospital) OD reporting began in June 2016. Since then there have been 8 ODs reported, of which one was opioid related. Of these 8 OD's, 3 were admitted, 2 were transferred, 2 were discharged and 1 resulted in death.

Strategic Activities Initiated/Ongoing in the VCH Region

Strategies	Accomplishments to Date
Prevention & Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-time Drug Alert and Response System (RADAR) – web survey and text messaging tool that will receive reports regarding overdoses from service providers and persons who use drugs (PWUD) and circulate relevant info back to the community • Support for youth and schools around overdose
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch changed to NOVEMBER, pilot for 3-6 months • RADAR web survey, to be hosted on www.vch.ca/overdose • Community participation to include: peers, VCH staff, contract services and community partners • Letter and info sheet for schools, parents and youth created for Richmond to be adapted regionally

Take Home Naloxone (THN) and Delegated Naloxone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Departments: THN programs will be established in all emergency departments and urgent care centres across VCH and PHC, so that all patients with an opioid overdose diagnosis will be offered a THN kit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff training planned for Squamish Training completed for Bella Bella, Bella Coola, Whistler, Pemberton Distributing THN kits through the ED: St. Paul's, LGH, BCCH, RH, VGH, UBCH, Powell River, Sechelt, and MSJ Media announcements for UBC & Powell River hospitals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THN expansion in Vancouver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65 active sites 26 sites joined the program in 2016 Map posted online of publicly available sites
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overdose prevention in supportive housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A check sheet will be used to guide protocols at housing facilities to prevent overdose events – collaboration between VCH & Fraser Health
Supervised Injection Services (SIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase integrated SIS in Vancouver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 applications were submitted to Health Canada on Oct. 31: Powell St. Getaway (DTES Mental Health and Substance Use Drop-in Centre) 528 Powell St. and Heatley Integrated Health Centre at 330 Heatley St. Media announcement for SIS application submission VCH sent a request for interested parties to submit an application to provide women's only SIS (deadline Oct. 27) Media announcement for women's only SIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervene in overdoses and observe injections by creating access to trained peers with overdose intervention skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VANDU began a mobile patrol pilot (3 months) in the alleys behind Insite and VANDU in October Spikes on Bikes a program of PHS was funded by VCH to patrol alleys in the DTES neighborhood for overdose intervention and needle sweeps till March 2016
Fentanyl Drug Checking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide people who use drugs with a better understanding of their personal exposure to fentanyl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fentanyl drug checking pilot continues at Insite
Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase access to opioid replacement therapy (ORT) to support the reduction of illicit drug use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection Clinic launches services out of DCHC to provide outpatient methadone and Suboxone