

Information Bulletin Report #6: 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 October 31, 2016 there were 622 overdose (OD) deaths due to illicit drug use across BC. As of September 30, fentanyl was detected in 60% of them. 147 of the deaths occurred in the Vancouver Coastal Health region, including 124 in Vancouver, 7 in Richmond, 6 in Powell River and 5 in North Vancouver.

Overdoses in VCH and PHC urban areas

- From January 1 to November 26, 2016 there were 6016 illicit or unknown drug overdoses presenting to VCH and PHC emergency departments (ED). More than one quarter of them (1679; 28%) were opioid related. 85% of them went to hospitals in Vancouver. The majority (72%) of them to St. Paul's Hospital.
- The substance isn't known for almost half (43%) of all presenting overdoses. When the substance was known the most commonly patient-reported substance was heroin (23%).
- The majority of overdoses occurred in males (70%) 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.
- Of overdose patients to VCH and PHC urban EDs 47% live in Vancouver, 4% were from Richmond, 5% were from Coastal Urban, and 1% were from Coastal Rural. The majority of Vancouver residents were from City Centre and the Downtown Eastside. The remaining patients live in other health authority regions or didn't state where they are from.
- Since the end of September the number of ODs occurring at Insite and the number of heroin ODs presenting to VCH and PHC EDs have been significantly higher than historical averages and have increased to the highest numbers recorded in 2016.

Overdoses in VCH rural areas

- In VCH rural hospitals (Bella Coola General Hospital, RW Large Memorial Hospital, Sechelt Hospital, and Powell River General Hospital) OD reporting began in June 2016. Since then there have been 15 ODs reported, of which three were opioid related. Of these 15 ODs, 7 were admitted, 3 were discharged, 2 were transferred, 1 left against medical advice, 1 resulted in death, and for 1 the outcome was unknown.

Strategic Activities Initiated/Ongoing in the VCH Region

Strategies	Accomplishments to Date	
Prevention & Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Forums Carfentanil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond & North Shore Youth & parent tips & info posted online at www.vch.ca/overdose VCH and PHC distributed carfentanil warning to service providers

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 Coola Distributing THN kits through the ED: St. Paul's, LGH, BCCH, RH, VGH, UBCH, Powell River, Sechelt, MSJ, Whistler, Bella Bella
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THN expansion in VCH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 71 active sites Map posted online of publicly available sites www.vch.ca/overdose Naloxone trainings: Train-the-trainer sessions have begun for educators and peers in many service agencies; these trainers will train their own staff & clients
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overdose prevention in supportive housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check sheet developed to guide protocols at housing facilities– collaboration with Fraser Health www.vch.ca/media/Overdose-Prevention-Checklist.pdf
Supervised Injection Services (SIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase integrated SIS in Vancouver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 applications are being processed by Health Canada for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Powell St. Getaway (DTES Mental Health and Substance Use Drop-in Centre) 528 Powell St. and; Heatley Integrated Health Centre at 330 Heatley St. Women's only SIS site selection in progress
	<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 - mobile patrol pilot (3 months) in the alleys – 12 hours/7 days week evaluation to be done by BCCFE, funded by VCH Spikes on Bikes pilot (3 months) a program of PHS, funded by VCH, patrolling alleys for overdose intervention – 12 hours/7 days week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> News release at www.vch.ca/about-us/news/news-releases/new-programs-to-combat-overdose-crisis
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 82% of the heroin/opioids checked are positive for fentanyl 66% of other drugs (with no opioid reported) checked are positive for fentanyl
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"> Pre-Connection Clinic launched services out of DCHC on Oct. 12th to provide Opioid Replacement Therapy (ORT), MD 5days week. RN coverage on weekends. 40 people have started ORT since opening.

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