



BRITISH
COLUMBIA



British Columbia's Overdose Emergency & Response

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UBCM Mayors' Forum

September 23, 2019

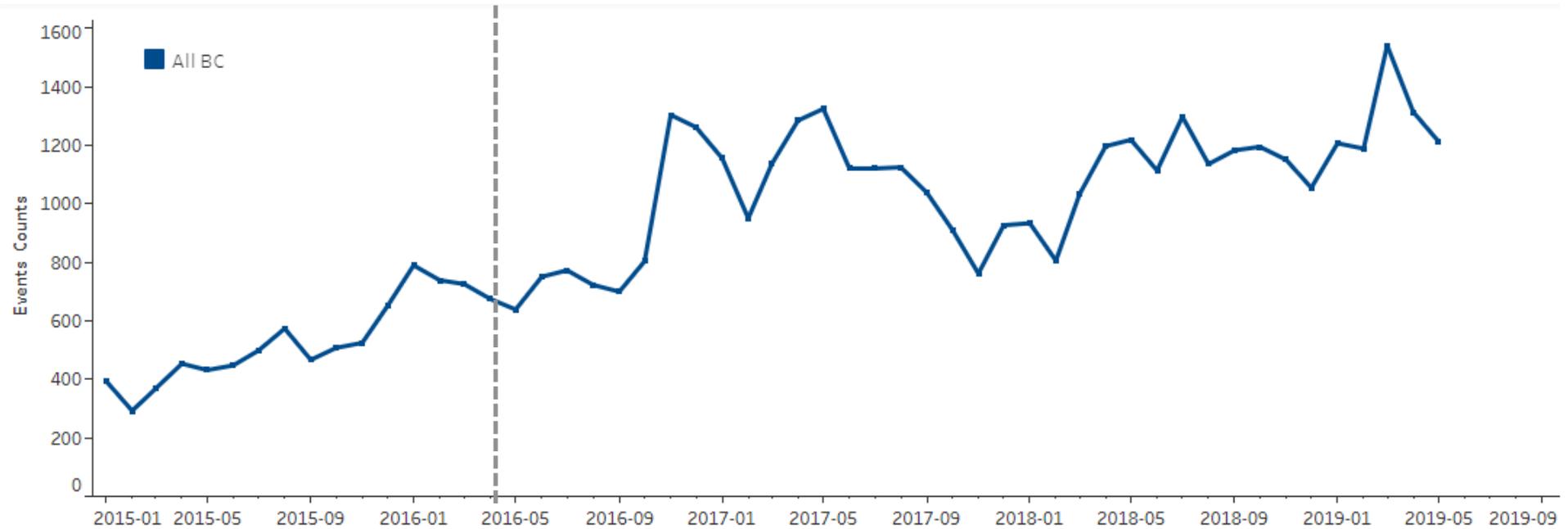
A Province-Wide Emergency

- April 14, 2016: BC's Provincial Health Officer declared a public health emergency.
- 1,533 people died from suspected drug toxicity in 2018 (1,495 in 2017; **538 January to June 2019**).
- Leading cause of unnatural death in BC, surpassing homicides, suicides, and motor vehicle collisions combined.
- British Columbians continue to experience unprecedented rates of overdose-related harms due to an unregulated drug supply that is unpredictable and highly-toxic.



Drug Toxicity Deaths

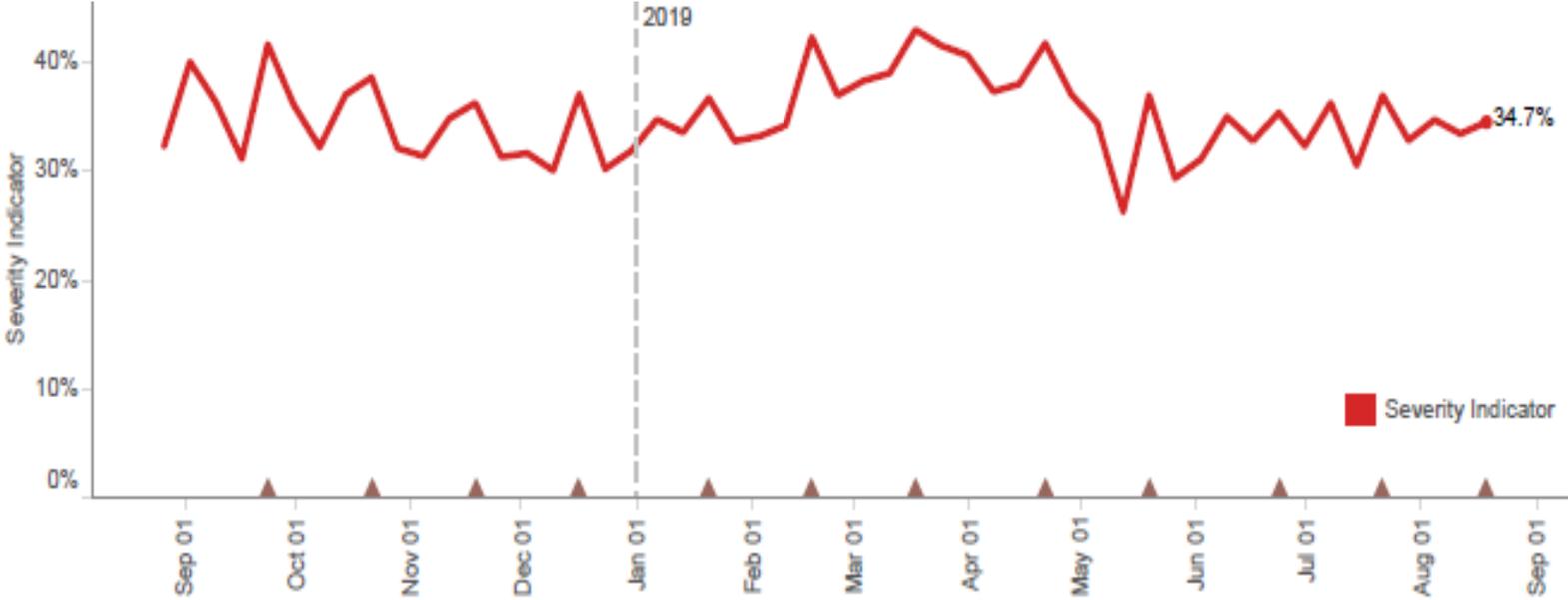
Declaration of provincial emergency



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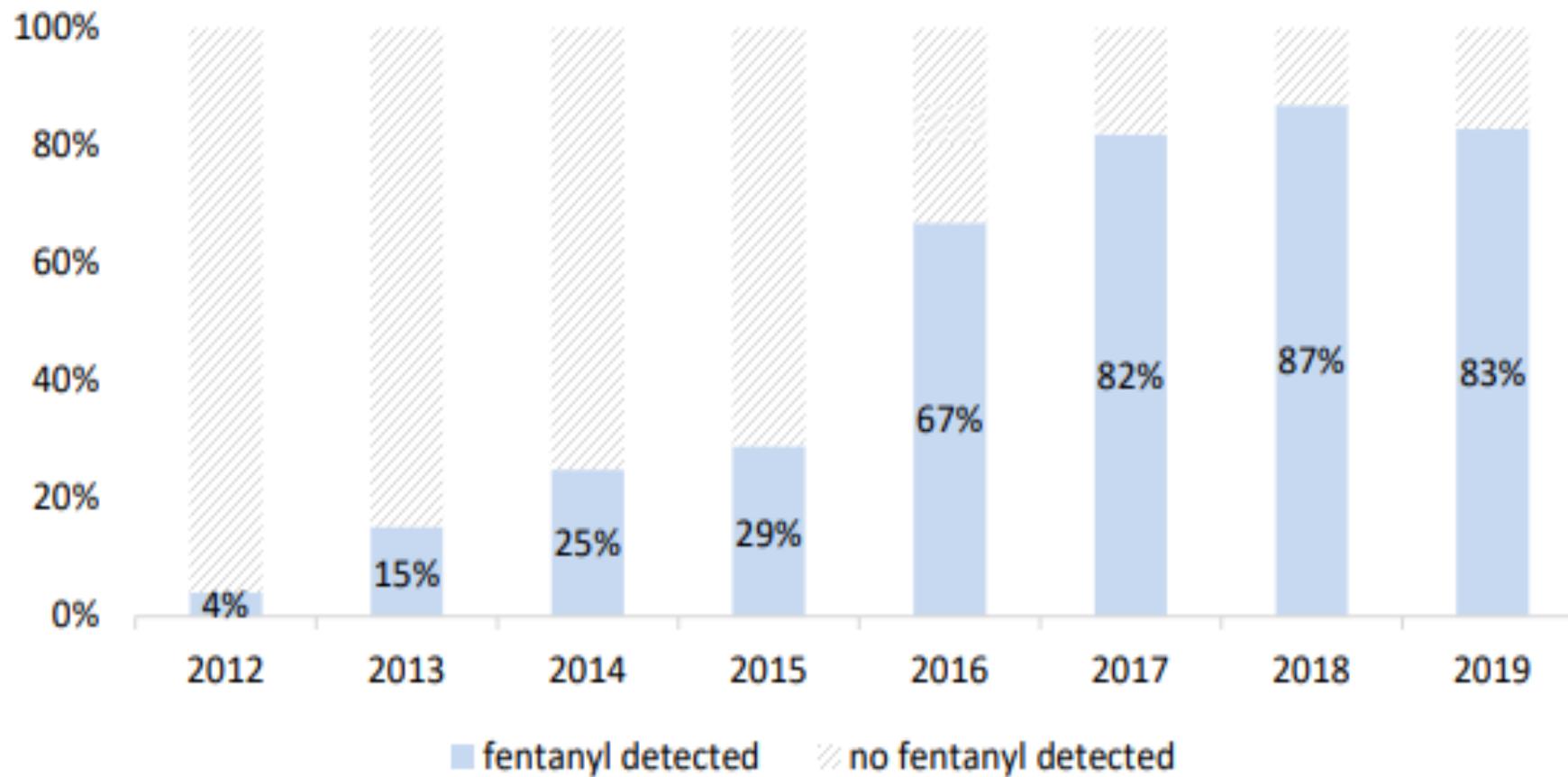
Coroners Service

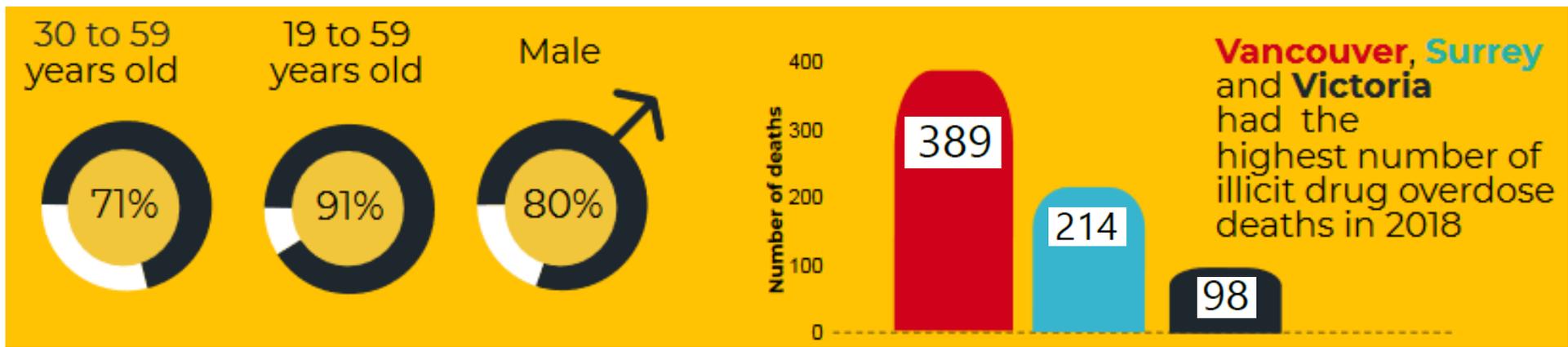
Severity Trends



31% of 911 calls related to ingestion poisoning coded in the most severe category at the time of ambulance dispatch

A Highly-Toxic Drug Supply





79% recently contacted the health system for pain

77% were regular users of illegal drugs

69% used drugs alone

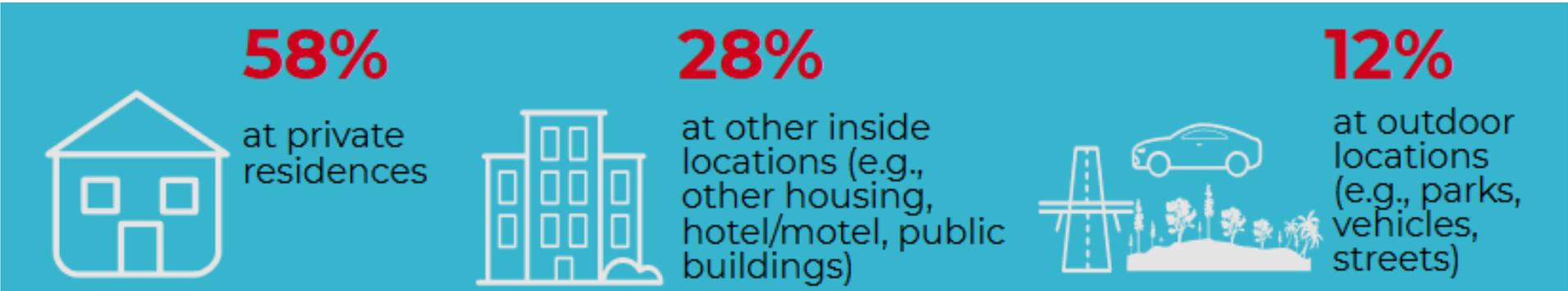
52% had evidence of a mental health disorder

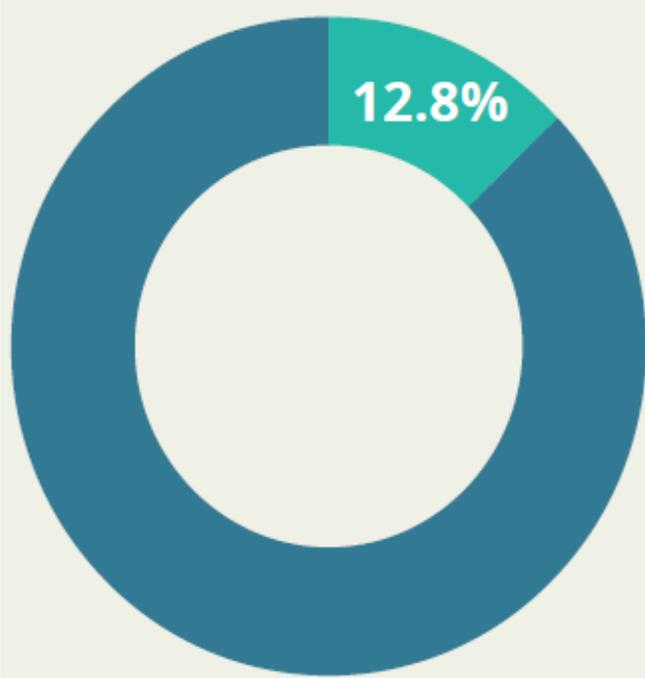
44% employed at the time of death

30% recently involved with the corrections system

13% lived in social or supportive housing

9% were unsheltered (experiencing homelessness)





In 2018, 12.8% of all overdose deaths in BC were in First Nations people. This is

4.2X

the rate observed among other Residents who experience overdose deaths.

It was 3.4 in 2017



FIRST NATIONS MEN + WOMEN
OVERDOSE DEATHS

61%
MEN



39%
WOMEN

**21%
INCREASE
2017 TO 2018**



FIRST NATIONS MEN + WOMEN
OVERDOSE EVENTS

54%
MEN



46%
WOMEN

THE CRISIS IS BEING EXPERIENCED
**MOST ACUTELY
IN CITIES.**



First Nations Peoples

- First Nations people report less access to mental health and addiction treatment that is culturally safe and appropriate
- Systemic racism toward First Nations is a barrier to health care
- Unresolved intergenerational trauma is associated with a higher risk of substance use
- First Nations in BC are less advantaged than many other populations in terms of social determinants of health like poverty and lack of housing, which are also predictors of substance use disorder and addiction

BC Government Response



Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions

1. To improve access and quality of mental health and addictions services
2. Responsible for developing immediate response to the overdose crisis



Overdose Emergency Response Centre

- Mandate to work in partnership to escalate the response
- Coordinates response, support systems improvement, innovate
- Strong focus on local, action-oriented, rapid response
- Generate and gather data to monitor and adjust the response



Risk Factors for Addiction and Mental Illness

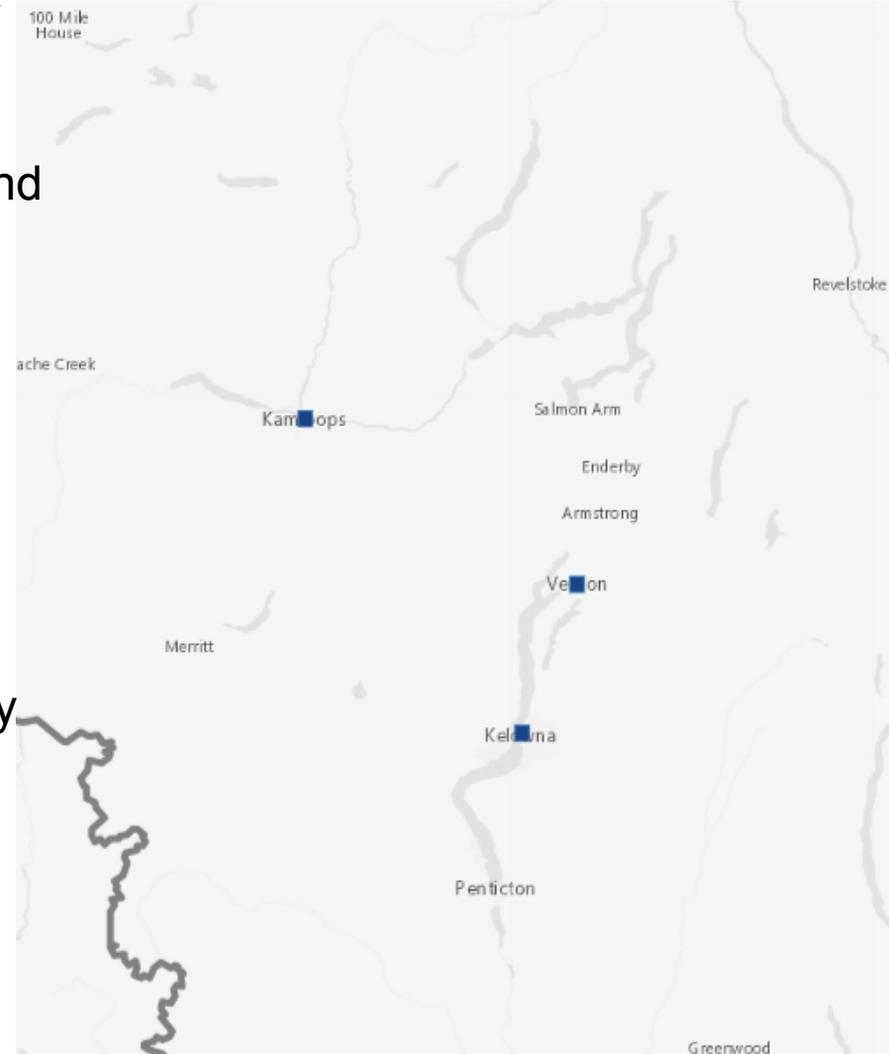
- Broader government approach
- Housing, poverty, early childhood development
- Indigenous reconciliation

Overdose Emergency Response Centre

- Spearhead urgent actions to save lives
- Strong focus on local, action-oriented, rapid response
- Regional Response Teams
- Community Action Teams
- Community Crisis Innovation Fund

Community Action Teams

- Established in communities identified via data as having most urgent need
- Ensure high level of local coordination and on-going communication among community stakeholders
- Team membership includes:
 - Municipality, First responders,
 - Front-line community agencies
 - Divisions of Family Practice
 - People with lived experience & family groups
 - First Nations communities and Gov't
- Escalates priority issues to Regional/ Provincial tables



Comprehensive Package of Interventions

Essential Health Sector Interventions	Essential Strategies for a Supportive Environment
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Naloxone</u></p> <p>Ensuring optimal supplies, training and community-level infrastructure to ensure sustained Naloxone access.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Social stabilization</u></p> <p>Community-level strategies to ensure on-going psycho-social support, access to housing, income stabilization, transportation, food.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Overdose Prevention Services</u></p> <p>Supporting a diversity of community-level, low barrier services tailored to population/ community needs.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Peer empowerment and employment</u></p> <p>Providing individual skills and capacity building initiatives within individuals and communities with lived experience.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Acute overdose risk case management</u></p> <p>Robust surveillance, analytics and referral system to identify individuals at risk within communities and capacity for follow-up connection to care.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cultural safety and humility</u></p> <p>In collaboration with Indigenous communities and organizations, ensuring services are rooted in an understanding of the social and historical context of health and healthcare inequities.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Treatment and Recovery</u></p> <p>Ensuring low-barrier access to full spectrum of evidence-based medications and comprehensive treatment and recovery services.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Addressing stigma, discrimination, and human rights</u></p> <p>Policy/legal analysis and action plans to address barriers to services based on stigma and discrimination.</p>

BC Take Home Naloxone Program

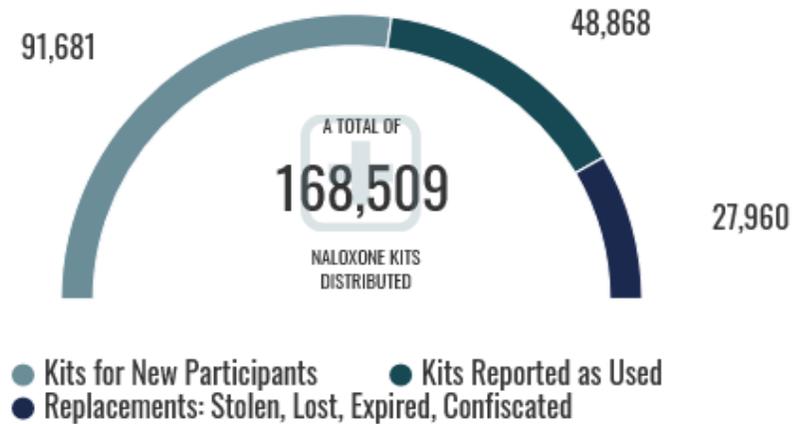


ACTIVE THN
DISTRIBUTION
LOCATIONS IN BC
INCLUDING:



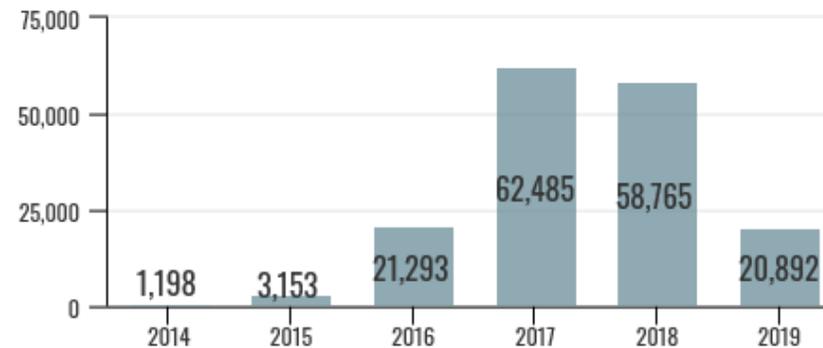
48,868 KITS REPORTED
AS USED TO
REVERSE AN
OVERDOSE

DISTRIBUTION OF KITS

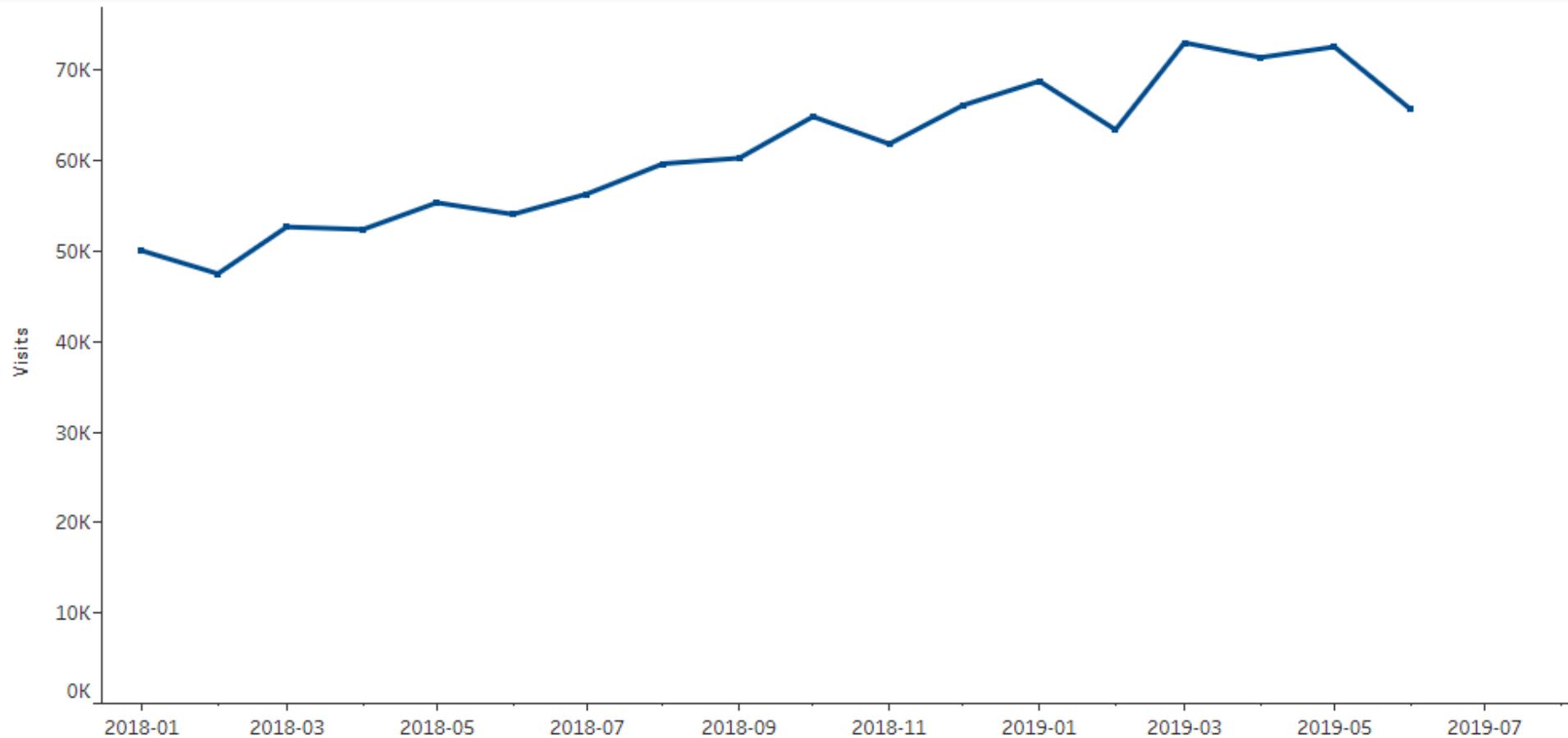


NUMBER OF KITS DISTRIBUTED BY YEAR

Data are derived from a live environment and data from most recent two months are subject to change. Distribution data are reasonably complete until May 31st, 2019.



Visits to Overdose Prevention and Supervised Consumption Services



33 OPS / SCS locations in BC

Comprehensive Package of Interventions



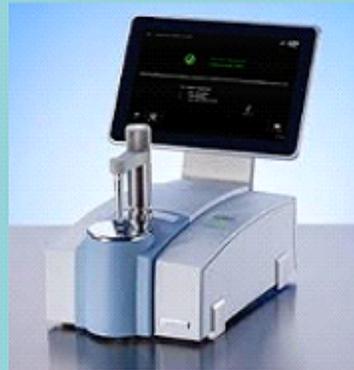
Comprehensive Package of Interventions

Drug Checking

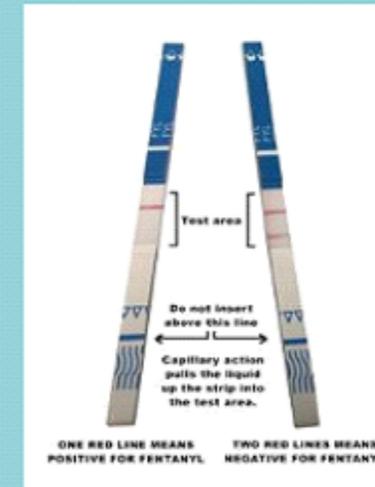
Drug checking is intended to reduce harm(s) associated with substance use by offering individuals the option of checking their drugs for the presence of fentanyl or other contaminants. The intention is to improve awareness amongst people who use drugs (PWUD) of the contents in the substances(s).



2 sites with
FTIR
Machines



9 sites with
Fentanyl Test
Strips



Comprehensive Package of Interventions

Essential health sector interventions

3. Acute overdose risk case management:

Robust surveillance, analytics and referral system to identify individuals at risk within communities, and capacity for follow-up connection to care

- Screening for opioid use at healthcare sites
- Clinical follow-up for all individuals at risk
- Fast-track pathways to treatment and care
- System for monitoring patient outcome evaluation and follow-up

Comprehensive Package of Interventions

Essential health sector interventions

4. Treatment and Recovery:

Ensuring low-barrier access full spectrum of evidence based medications and comprehensive treatment approaches:

- Methadone, Suboxone, Oral morphine, Injectable hydromorphone
- Continuum of treatment and recovery programs for opioid dependence that combines pharmacological and psychosocial approaches.
- Multi-disciplinary approach to management of pain

Comprehensive Package of Interventions

Essential strategies for an enabling environment

1. Social stabilization and recovery:

Community-level strategies to ensure on-going psychosocial support, access to housing, income-stabilization, transportation, food

- Availability of support groups/healing circles, counselling
- Engagement of families/support systems
- Access to affordable and/or supported housing
- Support programs incorporate capacity to address housing, income, food insecurity

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Essential strategies for an enabling environment

2. Peer Empowerment and Employment:

Providing individual skills and capacity-building initiatives within communities or individuals at risk

- Diversity of paid peer program opportunities
- Peer-led initiatives
- Peer training opportunities
- Programs involve people with lived experience in strategic program planning and decision-making

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Essential strategies for an enabling environment

3. Cultural safety and humility:

In collaboration with First Nations Health Authority and Indigenous organizations, ensuring services are rooted in an understanding of the social and historical context of health and healthcare inequities

- Cultural safety teachings and support are available to all service providers
- Facility/space and program design are trauma-informed and culturally safe
- Continuum of services and support incorporates Indigenous approaches to healing and wellness
- Elders are involved in service delivery and planning

Comprehensive Package of Interventions

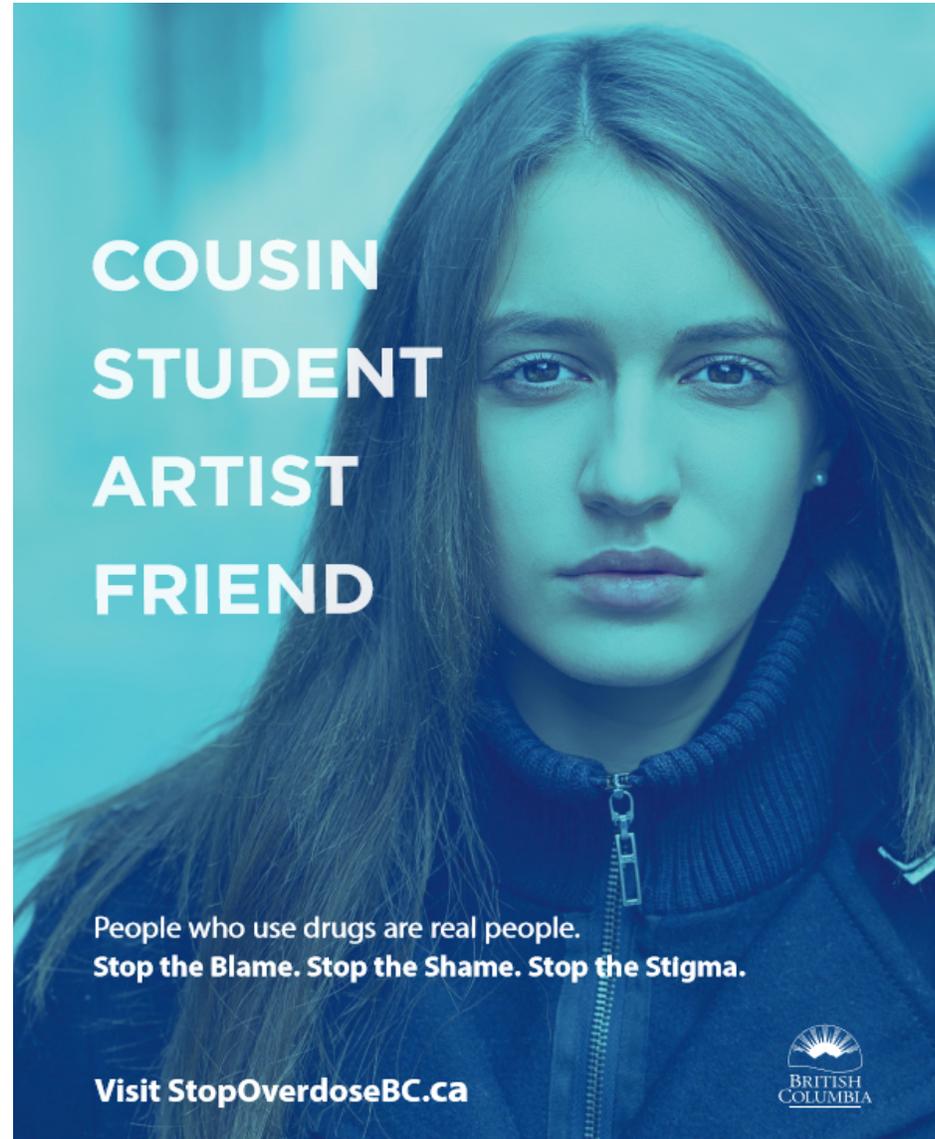
Essential strategies for an enabling environment

4. Addressing stigma, discrimination & human rights

Policy/legal analysis and action plans to address barriers to services based on stigma and discrimination

- Public education resources, stigma reduction campaigns
- Community-level actions to address barriers in access to services for people who use drugs.

Stigma Reduction Campaign



**COUSIN
STUDENT
ARTIST
FRIEND**

People who use drugs are real people.
Stop the Blame. Stop the Shame. Stop the Stigma.

Visit StopOverdoseBC.ca



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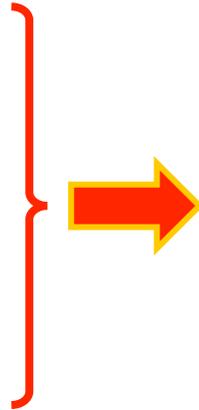
Successes since April 2016

- 10 Naloxone kits distributed



1 death of a British Columbian averted

- Naloxone distribution
- Combined with supervised consumption services
- Overdose prevention services
- Opioid agonist treatment

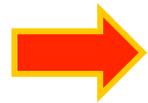


60% of all possible overdose deaths averted

4,700 deaths prevented

The Crisis Continues

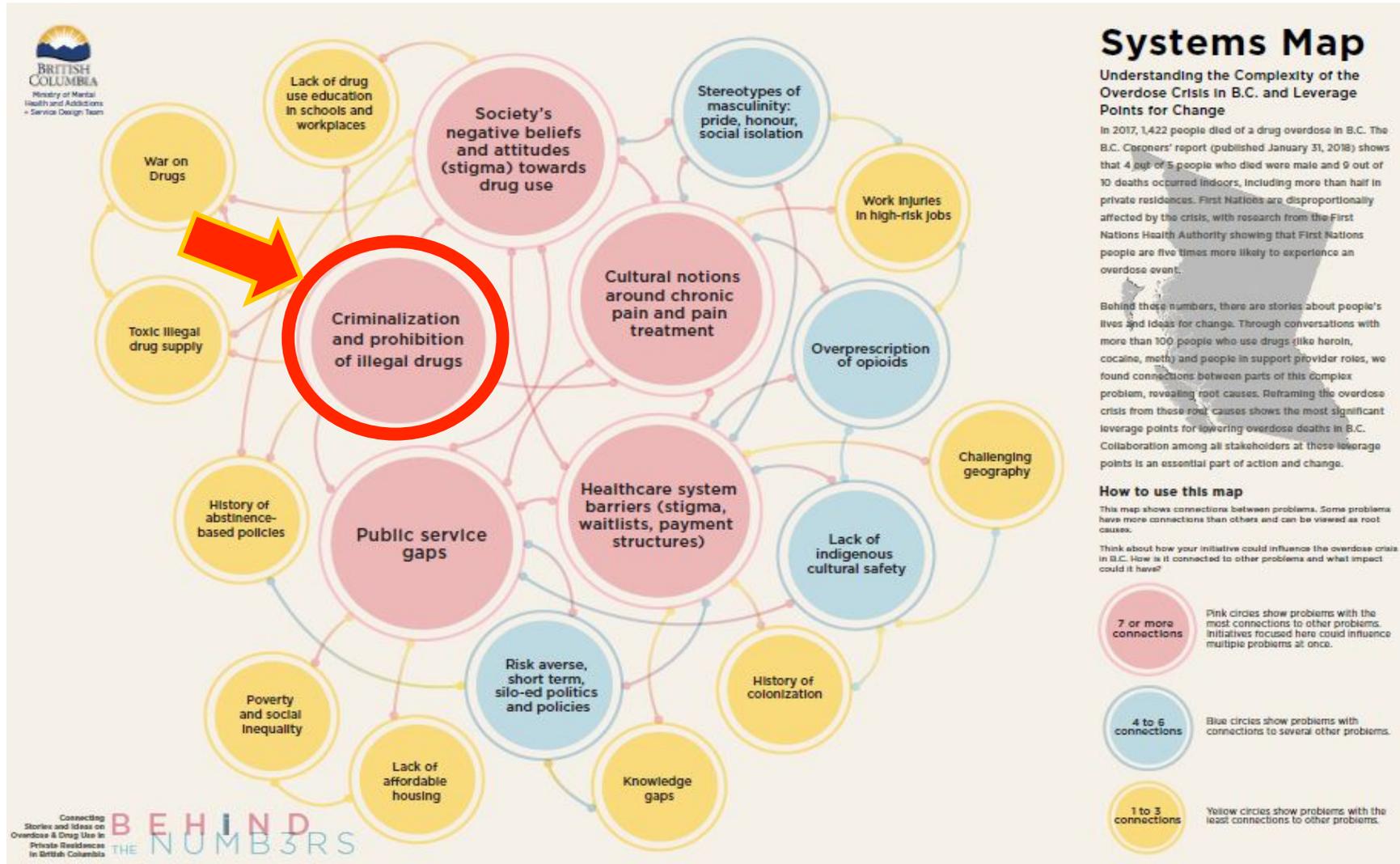
- Despite these successful initiatives, the number of British Columbians dying from and vulnerable to overdose remains unacceptably high.



Average of 3 British Columbians dying each day.

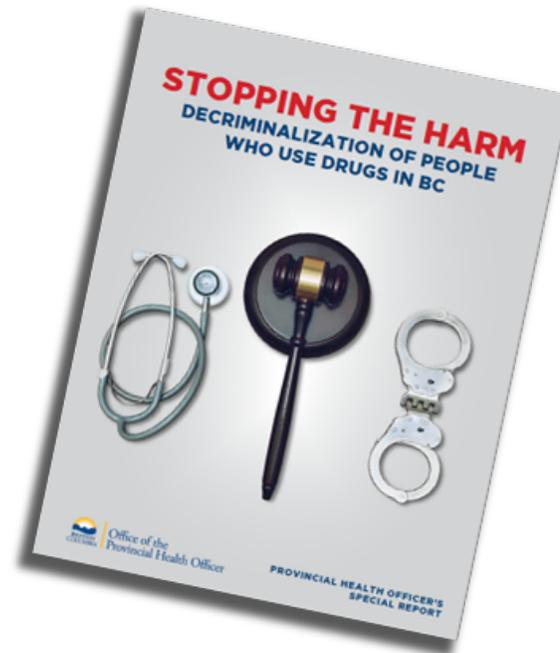
- Overdose deaths have become so pervasive that they are having a measured, negative impact on life expectancy at birth in BC– impacting everyone.

Much More To Do



PHO Special Report → *Stopping the Harm: Decriminalization of People Who Use Drugs in BC*

Decriminalization of people who are in possession of controlled drugs for personal use.



Next Steps

- Continue to prioritize urgent actions to save lives
- Continue to build a network of treatment and recovery services
- Implement *A Pathway to Hope: A roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people in British Columbia*
- Explore new and innovative approaches e.g., increasing access to **pharmaceutical-grade medications as alternatives to the illegal street drugs**

Questions?

