

Harm Reduction and BC's Overdose Emergency

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Land Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered today on the traditional and unceded territories of the Squamish and Lil'wat peoples.

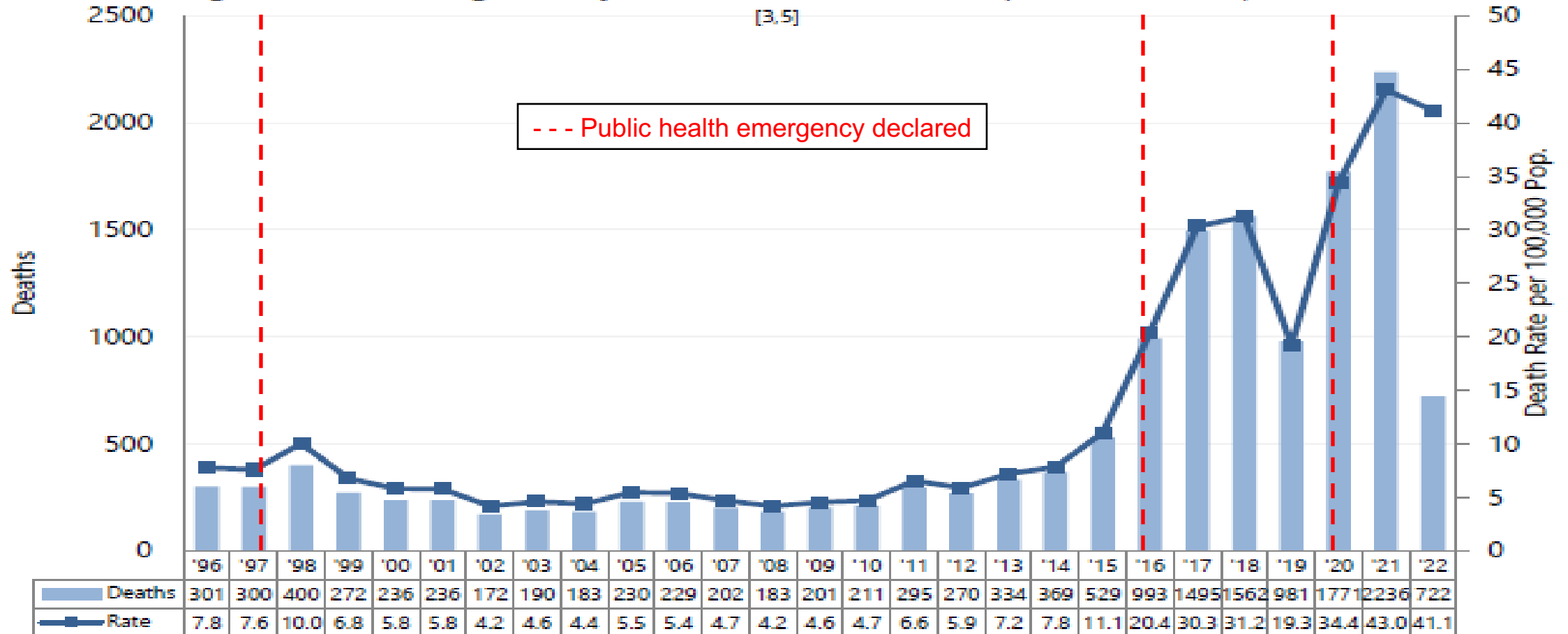
I would also like to acknowledge that Indigenous people have been disproportionately harmed by the overdose emergency.

Outline

- Overview of BC's overdose emergency
- What is causing the emergency?
- What causes overdose and addiction?
- What is harm reduction and how does it fit into the substance use system of care?
- What is the role of health authorities and Medical Health Officers in harm reduction?

BC's Overdose Emergency

Figure 1: Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths and Death Rate per 100,000 Population

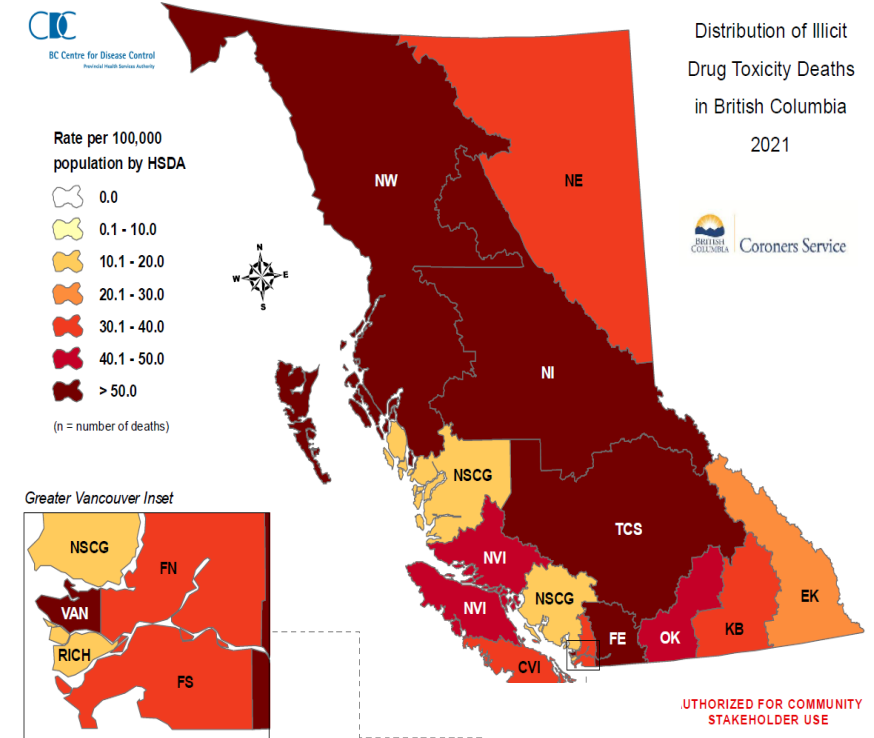
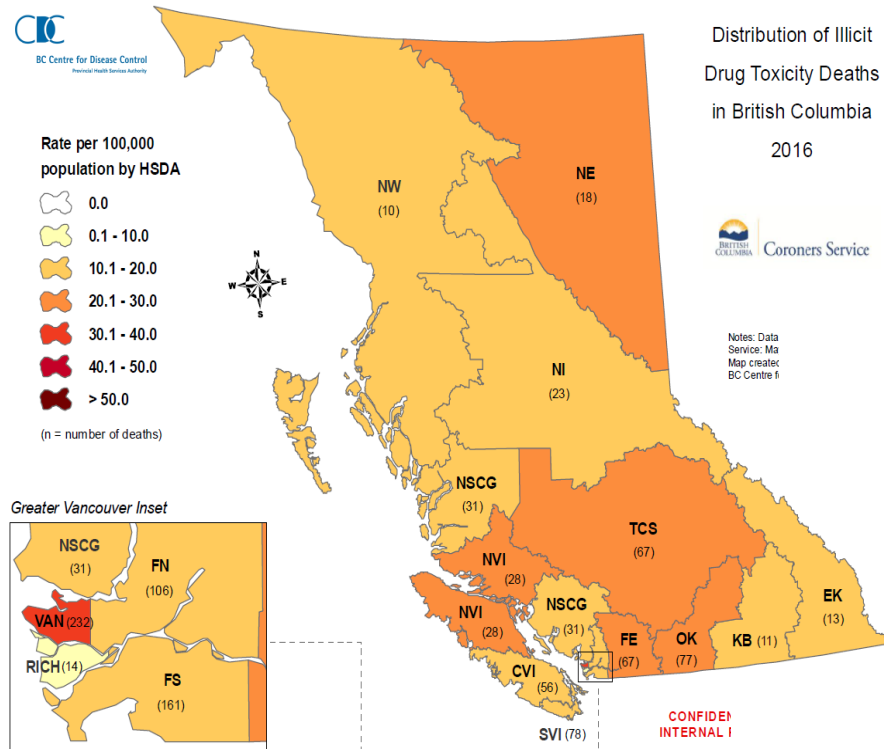


Source: BC Coroner's Service (2022)

What is causing the emergency?



Where are overdose deaths occurring?

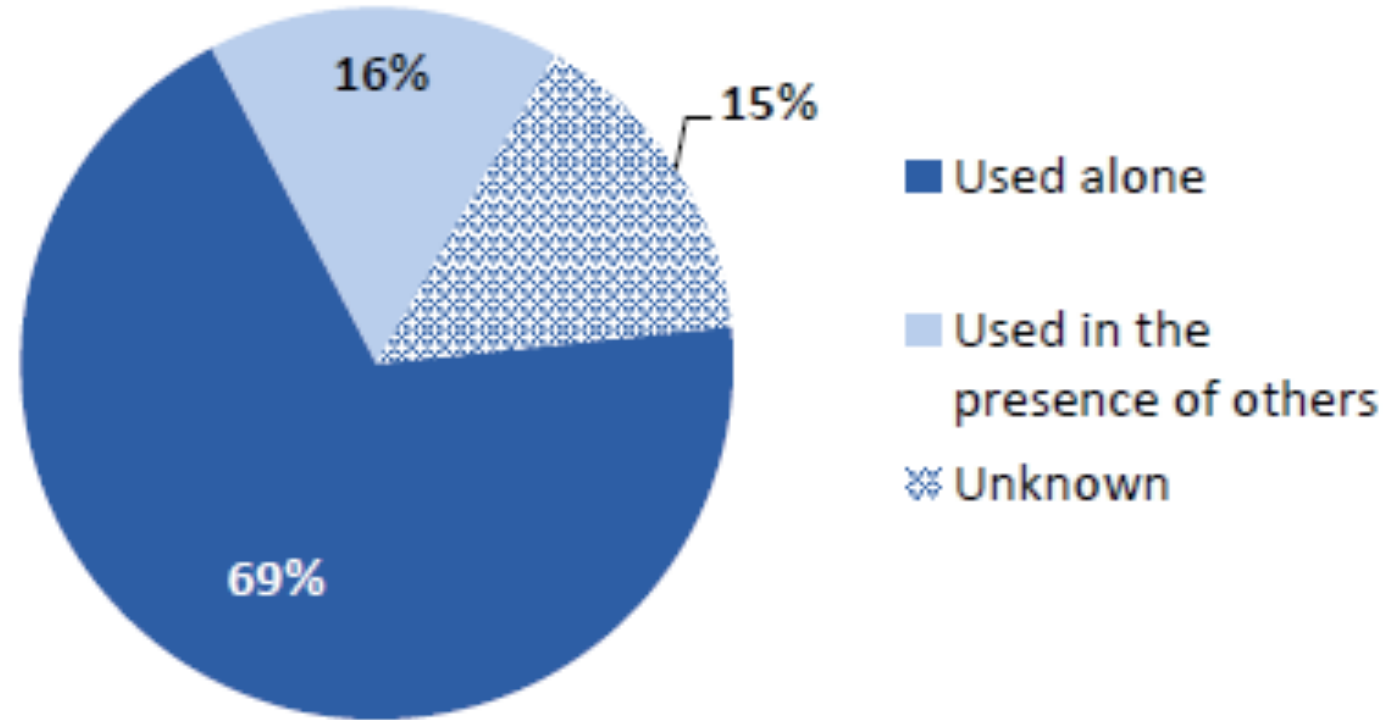


Where are overdose deaths occurring?

Table 2: Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths by Place of Injury, BC, 2019-2022^[B]

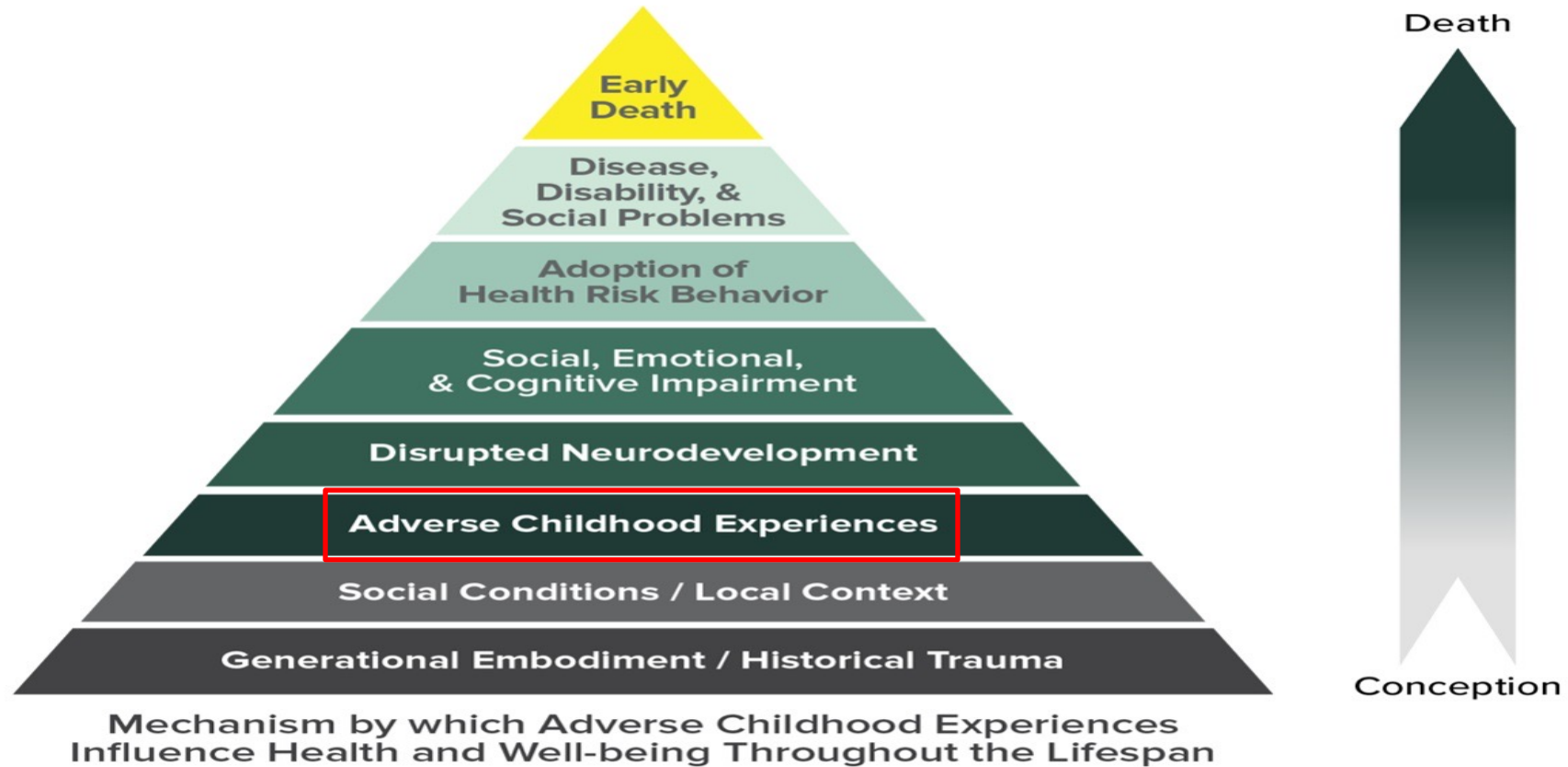
	2019	2020	2021	2022
Inside:				
Private Residence	566 (57.7%)	1,005 (56.8%)	1,241 (55.5%)	415 (57.5%)
Other Residence	258 (26.3%)	461 (26.0%)	558 (25.0%)	166 (23.0%)
Correctional facility/police cell	4 (0.4%)	5 (0.3%)	8 (0.4%)	2 (0.3%)
Medical facility	5 (0.5%)	5 (0.3%)	9 (0.4%)	2 (0.3%)
Occupational site	6 (0.6%)	7 (0.4%)	8 (0.4%)	2 (0.3%)
Public building				
Public washroom	11 (1.1%)	6 (0.3%)	12 (0.5%)	10 (1.4%)
Other area of building	8 (0.8%)	13 (0.7%)	28 (1.3%)	16 (2.2%)
Outside	117 (11.9%)	251 (14.2%)	339 (15.2%)	99 (13.7%)
Unknown	6 (0.6%)	18 (1.0%)	33 (1.5%)	10 (1.4%)
Total	981	1,771	2,236	722

Why are overdose deaths occurring?



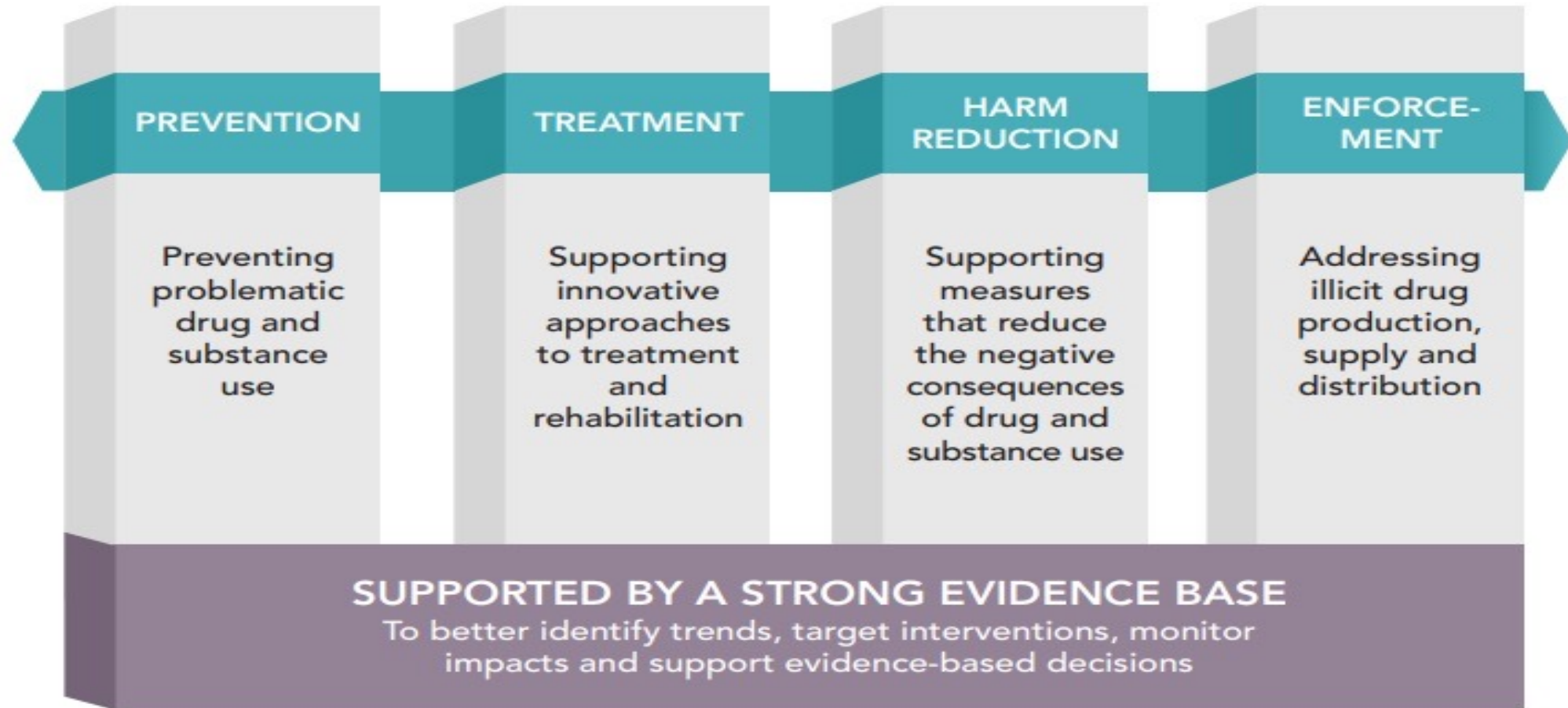
Source: BC Coroner's Service (2018)

What causes addiction?



Source: US Centres for Disease Control (2021)

The Four Pillar Approach



Harm Reduction Services in BC

Take Home Naloxone



Supervised Consumption Sites



Drug Checking



Overdose Prevention Sites



Evidence about Supervised Consumption and Overdose Prevention Sites

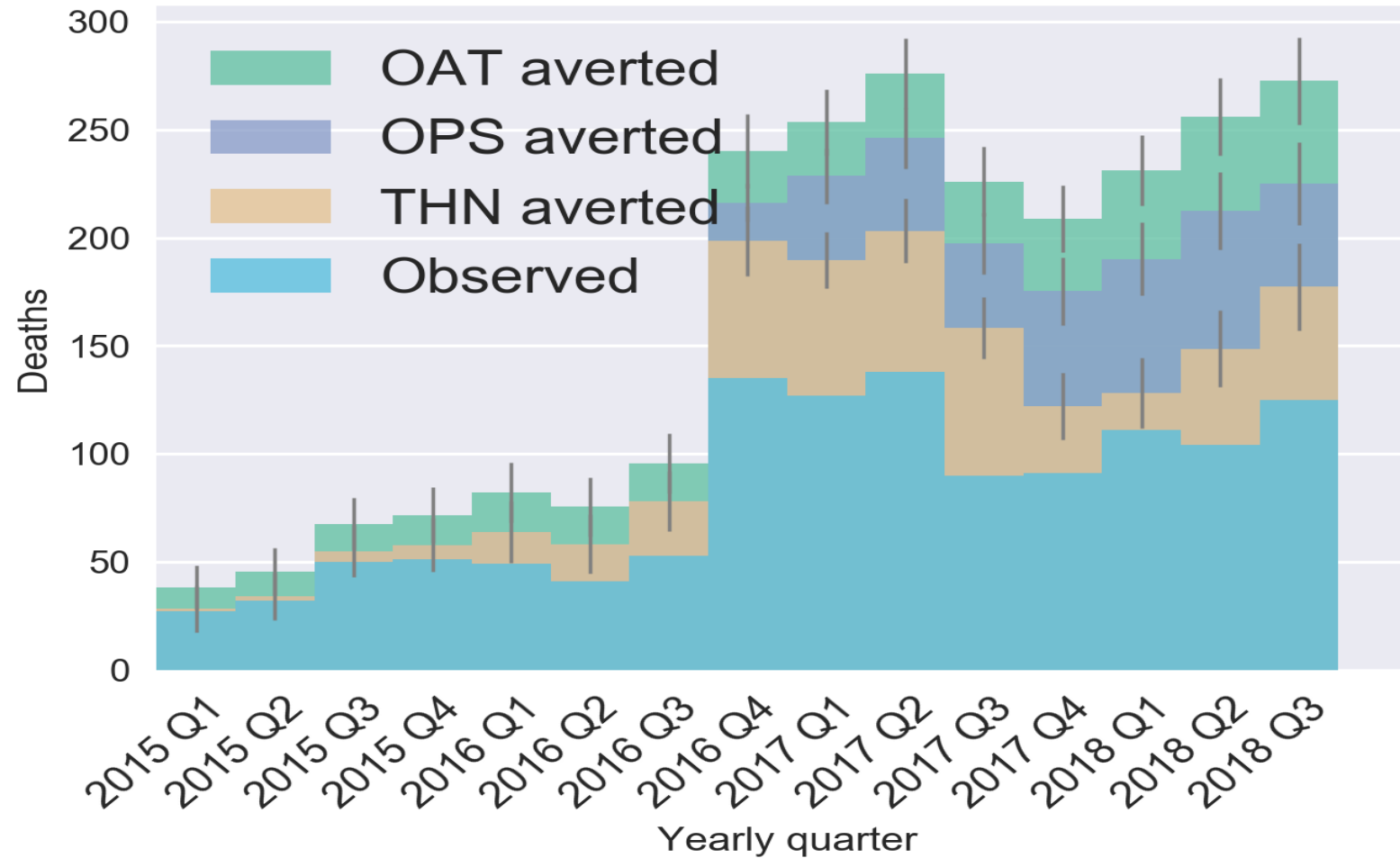
Benefits to individuals

- Reduces overdose risk and prevents overdose death
- Reduces needle sharing and prevents HIV infection
- Increases uptake of addiction treatment
- Improves care for injection related infections
- Improves safety for women who inject drugs

Benefits to communities

- Decreases public drug use, overdoses and injection-related litter
- Not associated with increased drug use or crime
- Reduces health care costs:
 - Insite prevents ~83.5 HIV infections per year and saves \$17.6 million in HIV related medical care
 - Calgary SCS saves \$1600 per OD reversed onsite and saved \$2.3 million over the 2 year study period

Impact of Harm Reduction in VCH



Source: BC Centre for Disease Control (2019)

Role of HAs and Medical Health Officers in Harm Reduction Services

- Overdose surveillance and monitoring of population trends related to substance use and addiction
- Delivery of harm reduction and other substance use services in collaboration with community partners
- Seeking federal exemptions and/or providing OPS designations
- Development of guidelines for service provision
- Provision of outreach services to connect people to services
- Collaboration with health system and other partners
- Evaluation and research
- Public policy advocacy