

# background information:

## Overdose Prevention Services – 715 Canada Avenue

As part of the Province's response to the overdose emergency, Island Health has implemented overdose prevention services at 715 Canada Avenue in Duncan.

### What are overdose prevention services (OPS)?

The overdose prevention service provides a place where people who use substances can be safely monitored and treated immediately if they overdose. Staff at the site are equipped with naloxone and are trained for overdose response. OPS are temporary services allowed under special Ministerial Order (Ministerial Order M488) under the Emergency Services Act.

### Why do we need OPS?

Between January 2016 and June 2017, there were 283 overdose deaths across the Island Health service region, including more than 25 in the Cowichan Valley. This demonstrates the need to respond to the current health crisis with services for overdose prevention, and save lives.

### What are the benefits of OPS?

- ✓ Fewer overdose deaths
- ✓ Fewer discarded needles in public places
- ✓ Less frequent public drug consumption
- ✓ Reduced sharing of needles (reduced risk of Hep C and HIV transmission)
- ✓ Connect people to treatment and recovery services

### Will OPS contribute to more crime in our community?

In smaller communities such as Campbell River, Courtenay and Port Alberni where OPS have been in place for a number of months, there have been very few concerns expressed by neighbours, and these concerns have been responded to by the service provider. These services are established in neighbourhoods where there is a need, usually where drug use is already having an impact on the community and where harm reduction and health-care services are already available for those who use drugs.

### When will these services become available?

The Cowichan Valley-based overdose prevention service opened in September 2017 and is operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association-Cowichan Valley Branch. The service is available part of the day, seven (7) days a week. The overdose prevention service will be in operation as long as needed.