

July 2017

Opioid Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategies

Harm Reduction:

- Opened eight Overdose Prevention Sites across Vancouver Island to provide harm reduction supplies, timely intervention in the event of overdose, peer supports and connections to other services.
- Embedded and expanded harm reduction supply distribution/disposal services in front-line Island Health and community agency locations (e.g. Public Health Units, Mental Health and Substance Use services and Non-Governmental Organizations) to provide multiple, accessible locations for new supplies.
- Submitted two applications for Supervised Consumption Services in Victoria with one application pending in Nanaimo.
- Expanded and enhanced Naloxone kit distribution and training focused on improving access to people at risk of overdose, community agency service providers and Island Health staff in Mental Health and Substance Use Services, Emergency Departments, etc.
- Augmented Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team (Victoria) and Central Island Crisis Response services to include response to opioid overdoses.
- Expanded community outreach workers through contracts with agencies which serve people who use drugs to conduct education, outreach and connectivity in housed and non-housed populations.
- Provided on-site primary care and social support services to high risk residents of a supportive housing program (Johnson Street Community).

Treatment and Intervention:

- Added 42 new supportive recovery treatment beds across Vancouver Island, including five stabilization beds to support post-detox care.
- Opened a Rapid Access Addiction Clinic in Victoria (OAT) to increase capacity and provide timely access for clients seeking opioid agonist treatment or methadone treatment. This service also links to other community services and ensures smooth transitions for clients through recovery programs.
- Created an Addictions Medicine Consult Service to improve assessment and coordination of post-discharge services for patients in Victoria-area hospitals.
- Increased education to service providers, Emergency Department physicians/staff and Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) clinics on the evidence and effectiveness of OAT.
- Increased public and stakeholder awareness around where and how OAT services can be accessed.
- Enhanced connectivity, linkages and referrals within mental health and substance use service continuum.
- Integrated with Central Access and Rapid Engagement Services (CARES) and Sobering and Assessment Centre for rapid access to Mental Health and Substance Use programs, including specialist consultation and harm reduction supplies.