

January, 2017

Emergency Overdose Prevention Services in Rock Bay

Between January 1 and December 31, 2016, 155 people died from an illicit drug overdose in Island Health. Sixty-six of these individuals died in Victoria.

To save lives, Island Health is providing Overdose Prevention Services in several communities on Vancouver Island, including three locations already operational in Victoria (Pandora Avenue and two on Johnson Street). These services will be in effect for as long as they are needed and/or until permanent supervised consumption services can replace them.

An Overdose Prevention Service was added to existing services already available at 535 Ellice Street (Rock Bay Landing). It opened at the beginning of February, 2017. This location is a low barrier residential facility that provides emergency shelter, transitional housing and support services for high risk, vulnerable populations. The building is owned by the Province of BC on land owned by the City of Victoria. The building is operated and services are provided by Victoria Cool Aid Society.

The Overdose Prevention Service at Rock Bay Landing will be open 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week. Staff will have special training working with people who use substances, and will be able to intervene in an overdose. The Overdose Prevention Service will be operated by the Victoria Cool Aid Society with oversight and funding provided by Island Health. The service will be reviewed over the coming months to determine how it is meeting the needs of clients as well as the surrounding community and will inform decision making regarding the need for a comprehensive supervised consumption service in this area of Victoria.

Approximately 18 similar Overdose Prevention Services have been opened/are opening in communities across BC.

Overdose Prevention Services are allowed under Ministerial Order [Ministerial Order M488](#) under the Emergency Health Services Act. This order directs health authorities to provide 'Overdose Prevention Services for the purpose of monitoring persons who are at risk of overdose and providing rapid intervention as and when necessary, as ancillary health services.'

Both Overdose Prevention Services and supervised consumption services are part of a broad overdose response strategy that includes education, prevention, outreach, harm reduction, naloxone kits, counselling, substance use treatment and support, and access to mental health services.

Island Health is grateful for the ongoing support of the City of Victoria and Victoria Police Department in the response to the current opioid overdose crisis in our communities and in the creation of permanent supervised consumption services that will be one part of a comprehensive set of services intended to reduce the impact of addictions.

More information about the overdose crisis, including supervised consumption services is available [on line \(www.viha.ca/mho/overdose.htm\)](#). Questions about the Overdose Prevention Service can be emailed to scsviha.ca.