

# background information:

May 2017

## Emergency Overdose Prevention Services – 1371-c Cedar Street, Campbell River

Between January 1 and December 31 2016, 156 people died from an illicit drug overdose in Island Health. 23 of those deaths were in the North Island region (Campbell River/Comox Valley). Vancouver Island had the largest increase in rate of overdose deaths in 2016 compared to 2015 (156%).

As of March 31, 2017, a further 63 overdose fatalities have occurred. This includes nine fatalities in the North Island.

To save lives, Island Health, in partnership with community organizations, is providing Overdose Prevention Services (OPS) in Victoria, Nanaimo, Courtenay, Campbell River and Port Alberni. Approximately 23 similar overdose prevention services have been opened/are opening in communities across BC. These services will be in effect for as long as they are needed and/or until permanent supervised consumption services can replace them.

The Campbell River-based OPS began operating on May 15. The service is being operated by AIDS Vancouver Island (AVI) with funding from Island Health. AVI is adding the overdose prevention service to existing services already in place at 1371-c Cedar Street, including a range of health and harm reduction services.

The overdose prevention service provides a place where people who use illicit opioid drugs can be safely monitored and treated immediately if they overdose. Staff at the location are equipped with naloxone, are trained for overdose response, and will be able to intervene in an overdose. The service will be available during regular business hours, Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Friday 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (closed from 12:15 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. for lunch). Weekend opening hours are anticipated in the next month.

Overdose Prevention Services are allowed by 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.'

The creation of overdose prevention services are one part of a comprehensive set of services intended to reduce the impact of addictions. Both overdose prevention services as an emergency measure, and supervised

consumption services as a sustained intervention, are part of a broad overdose response strategy that includes education, prevention, outreach, harm reduction, naloxone kits, counselling, substance use treatment and supports, and access to mental health services.

Island Health is grateful for the ongoing support of the City of Campbell River, the local RCMP detachment, BC Ambulance and Campbell River Fire Department in the response to the current health crisis in our communities.

More information about the opioid overdose crisis, including overdose prevention services and supervised consumption services, is available on line ([www.viha.ca/mho/overdose.htm](http://www.viha.ca/mho/overdose.htm)). Questions about the services can be emailed to [scs@viha.ca](mailto:scs@viha.ca).