

Ministry of Health Summary Response – HLTH – 2016 – 64903

Request: All records indicating the amount of money BC has spent on the public health emergency declared in April, including funding for the joint task force, naloxone kits, public awareness, BCAS, addiction treatment, etc. (Date range for Record Search: From 04/01/2016 to 11/30/2016).

Response:

The Ministry of Health released information on December 19, 2016 indicating that “more than \$43 million in provincial funding is supporting measures that bolster the province-wide response to the crisis”. The news release document is attached as Appendix 1.

The detailed financial information related to this announcement is identified in the table below:

Description	Estimated expenditure (millions)
Overdose task force funding (incl. intranasal naloxone for police officers, special investigation unit by coroner's service, drug testing equipment for BCCDC, JIBC first responder website, start-up costs for new supervised consumption services, enhanced surveillance by health authorities and evaluation of drug checking approaches)	\$ 5.00
PSSG – Guns and Gangs	\$ 5.5
BC Coroner's Service (coroner's fees, body conveyance, morgue storage, toxicology testing, autopsies)	\$ 1.10
Establishment of BC Centre on Substance Use	\$ 5.00
BC Emergency Health Services	\$ 5.00
Health authority spending	\$ 4.42
Additional naloxone kits	\$ 0.32
Expanded access to suboxone	\$ 1.01
Annual operating costs of 220 additional addictions treatment beds	\$14.00
Community Action Initiative – resources for parents, people who work with youth and communities	\$.75
Public awareness campaign	\$ 1.18
TOTAL	\$43.28

It is important to note that actual expenses incurred in the current 2016/17 fiscal year by the province's five regional health authorities, the Provincial Health Services Authority (including its agencies such as the BC Emergency Health Services and the BC Centre for Disease Control) and the Ministry of Health on activities related to the crisis, will not be available to be reported until after the close of the 2016/17 fiscal year and finalization of health authority audited financial statements and the BC Public Accounts. This information will likely be available by July, 2017 (depending on the release of the BC Public Accounts).

Appendix 1

Update on actions to stem the overdose crisis in B.C.

Updated statistics released today from the BC Coroners Service show the number of illicit drug overdose deaths increased throughout B.C. in November. Government and its partners have taken many significant steps to address the overdose crisis this month.

Of particular note, the federal government recently announced they will take action under their new Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy on several initiatives B.C. has advocated for. The federal strategy includes simplifying the approval process for supervised consumption services – an evidence-based approach which prevents overdose deaths, helps mitigate the spread of communicable diseases and links users with resources for addiction treatment and recovery services. In addition, to interrupt the flow of illegal drugs into Canada, the strategy includes measures like prohibiting the importation of designated devices such as pill presses – unless they are registered with the minister of health – and providing Canada Border Service agents the authority to open suspicious packages under 30 grams or less.

A provincial cold-weather strategy has been activated in the hardest-hit communities to provide more tools to prevent overdoses. The Province's Mobile Medical Unit is now stationed in the Downtown Eastside as an alternative medical-care unit for patients who overdose, relieving pressure in emergency departments such as St. Paul's Hospital, and freeing up paramedics more quickly for the next 911 call. Eighteen overdose prevention sites will have opened by the end of December in high-risk areas in Vancouver, Surrey, Victoria, Prince George, Kelowna, Kamloops, Maple Ridge, Langley and Abbotsford. The sites provide a safe place for people using drugs to be monitored in case of overdose, and are supported through a ministerial order issued Dec. 9, 2016 under the Emergency Health Services Act and Health Authorities Act.

The overdose crisis requires both an acute response and a long-term strategy on substance use issues, involving immediate harm-reduction actions combined with longer-term addiction treatment and recovery pathways. In the past three years, health authorities have opened 300 new substance-use beds as part of the commitment to open 500 new beds. With tendering processes currently underway, more than 100 additional treatment beds will open next month, with the remainder on track to open by March 31, 2017. In light of the current epidemic of overdoses, in addition to these beds the Ministry of Health is looking at bringing on extra surge capacity in treatment beds and other treatment resources, utilizing a range of different approaches, as soon as possible.

Government continues to take actions on many fronts to prevent and respond to overdoses in B.C. New items since the last provincial update on Nov. 15, 2016 include:

- On Dec. 7, 2016, all licensed or registered treatment facilities in B.C. were directed to carry naloxone and ensure staff are trained to administer it.
- Nurse practitioners will be able to continue Suboxone prescribing (after initiation by a physician) for their patients through an amendment to the Scope of Practice to Standards for Nurse Practitioners starting on Jan. 7, 2017.

- Four education modules to support teachers in helping teach children about drugs were developed in partnership with University of Victoria's Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CARBC). [www.uvic.ca/research/centres/carbc/publications/helping-schools]
- Resources on how to have conversations about drugs for parents and people who work with children and youth also have been developed in collaboration with CARBC. [www.healthlinkbc.ca/substance-use/parenting-articles]
- On Nov. 24, 2016, the RCMP and Chinese Ministry of Public Safety announced efforts against illegal fentanyl trafficking into Canada. [news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016PSSG0236-002494]
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development began offering no-charge naloxone kits and training to foster parents, community partners and ministry staff in the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island.
- Facility overdose response boxes with naloxone are being distributed to community organizations where overdoses are more likely to occur. Guidelines have been shared with supportive housing and homeless shelters to support the development of overdose response protocols.
- The BC Centre for Disease Control continues to expand the Take Home Naloxone program: 17,828 no-charge naloxone kits have been distributed to date – more than 12,000 this year alone. Naloxone kits are now being dispensed at 367 locations in B.C., including 57 emergency departments and four corrections facilities.
- To date over 5,700 police members have been trained to use naloxone, with over 30 incidents where naloxone was used.
- Vancouver Coastal Health and partners launched two new overdose prevention outreach teams in the Downtown Eastside. Island Health and Fraser Health also launched teams in Victoria and Surrey.
- Island Health, Fraser Health and Interior Health began public engagement in preparation for supervised consumption site applications in Victoria, Surrey, Kelowna and Kamloops.
- On Nov. 24, 2016, the RCMP and Chinese Ministry of Public Safety announced efforts against illegal fentanyl trafficking into Canada [news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2016PSSG0236-002494].
- Focused police investigations on fentanyl dealers have resulted in:
 - Dec. 1, 2016: Multi-agency investigation resulted in the seizure of 1.45 kilograms of fentanyl by Victoria Police.
 - Nov. 29, 2016: Carfentanil linked to Vancouver man's death.
 - Nov. 22, 2016: Carfentanil detected in Vancouver drug seizure
- Focused efforts by Canada Border Services Agency resulting in 47 seizures of fentanyl or carfentanil weighing a total of 11.7 kilos so far in 2016.

In September 2016, \$5 million in new funding was provided for strategies identified by the Joint Task Force on Overdose Response, as well as \$5 million more to help establish the BC Centre on Substance Use, and \$5 million in additional funding to enhance BC Emergency Health Services resources. Overall more than \$43 million in provincial funding is supporting measures that bolster the provincewide response to the crisis.

In July 2016, Premier Christy Clark appointed a Joint Task Force on Overdose Response to provide expert leadership and advice on additional actions to prevent and respond to overdoses in B.C. As part of the response, law enforcement is working at all levels of government to interdict the supply of toxic drugs, and health officials are working to address the immediate and longer-term health needs. To that

end, B.C. is expanding access to life-saving naloxone, supervised consumption services, and opioid addiction treatment medications and services. The Province is also investing in research, education and training through the new B.C. Centre on Substance Use to ensure addiction treatment is effective and evidence-based. The Province also launched a broad awareness campaign to alert people of how to prevent, identify and respond to overdoses.

Learn more:

To learn more about additional government actions to reduce overdoses, please visit:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/actions-to-prevent-overdoses-in-bc>

To learn more about Coroners Service statistics on illicit drug overdose deaths, please visit: www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/death-investigation/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf

To learn more about the BC Coroners Service statistics on fentanyl-detected illicit drug overdose deaths, please visit: www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/death-investigation/statistical/fentanyl-detected-overdose.pdf

#	Strategy	Description	Target Audience	Anticipated Outcome	Estimated Cost
Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General Strategies					
1	Naloxone Issue & Training	Issue of naloxone to police agencies in BC (RCMP and Municipal) including the development and implementation of Naloxone training for police officers.	All BC police officers; for use in administering Naloxone to the public and for officer safety	Improved immediate responses from police to an overdose.	\$1,800,000
2	Closure of 2016 and 2015 Overdose Death Files	Assignment of several coroners to 2016 and 2015 overdose death files to conclude them ASAP as per prescribed investigation protocols with a specific focus on previous OD history, previous prescribed medication history, previous medical encounters, etc.	BC's Coroners Service and BC's Overdose Response Joint Task Force	Enhanced ability to close files within weeks rather than months and provide individual reports along with an analysis of trends and patterns that will aid in the overall overdose response.	\$350,000
3	Community Outreach & Awareness Strategies	- Development and execution of a province-wide community outreach/awareness strategy with police and HAs with programs such as and not limited to: - Enhance and rebrand where needed the current comprehensive public outreach campaign for "Know Your Source"; - Increase outreach with the public through campaigns with agencies such as Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU); - Development and execution of community forums on Fentanyl and other opioids - including their risks <i>These initiatives will be aligned and executed in consultation with Health and will leverage existing material and resources.</i>	- For community outreach/awareness- general public and frontline service providers including, but not limited to: community leaders, parents, teachers, students, persons with lived experience, police, social services, and health - For the enhanced and rebranded "Know Your Source" campaign- police to general public, especially those who may use drugs or consider using drugs - For increase outreach through public campaigns - general public, especially those who may witness or experience an overdose - For CFSEU campaign- police to general public, especially those who may be involved in the drug trade, or know someone involved in the drug trade - For Fentanyl dialogue forums- police, health service providers, non-governmental organizations and the public	- For community outreach/awareness- increased understanding of the risks, harms, and impacts of fentanyl and what to do in case of an emergency; - For the enhanced and rebranded "Know Your Source" campaign - increased awareness and understanding of fentanyl and how to be 'drug smart'; - For increase outreach through public campaigns - increased awareness and understanding of fentanyl and what to do when an overdose is suspected; - For CFSEU campaign- increased awareness and understanding of the consequences related to involvement with fentanyl; - For Fentanyl dialogue forums- enhanced dialogue between key service providers and the public, and increased understanding of the issues/barriers experienced at a community level.	\$500,000
4	Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement and Response Team (CLEAR) Team Equipment <i>*Funding at 70%</i>	Procurement of additional equipment for the CLEAR Team, which may include drug testing strips (similar to what is used by Insite).	RCMP CLEAR Team - Police Services/Officers	Enhanced ability to immediately test and detect fentanyl.	\$200,000
5	Dedicated Enforcement Activity <i>*Funding at 70%</i>	Fenced funding for Provincial Tactical Enforcement Priority (PTEP) initiated projects related to drug trafficking. Any products delivered will be aligned with Ministry of Health.	Target and disrupt PTEP and Drug Traffickers	Increased disruption and prosecution of drug traffickers.	\$550,000
Ministry of Health Strategies					
6	BC Toxicology Lab Equipment	One liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometer (\$470,000)	Improved sensitivity and rapidity of testing will allow faster reach of programs serving vulnerable populations	A liquid chromatograph-tandem mass spectrometer will speed up drug identification, have greater sensitivity and ability to identify additional, newer fentanyl analogues and new substances (e.g., W 18)	\$470,000
7	Supervised Consumption Facilities	Service location renovation and/or purchase of mobile service vehicle (VCH: \$130,000; FHA: \$130,000; IHA: \$130,000; NHA: \$130,000; ISIH: \$130,000)	Long-term opioid users, who are at highest risk of overdose death	As RHAs move forward with distributed model, existing clinics will require dome retrofitting. Alternatively, RHAs may use mobile service centres.	\$650,000
8	Surveillance Infrastructure	Enhanced server capacity and one time analytics at BC Centre for Disease Control to establish ongoing Emergency Health Services and Emergency Room data feeds and analyses (\$170K). Also \$140K for RHAs' regional surveillance support	Improved ability to identify emerging risks and tailor public health programs to serve vulnerable populations	More timely, granular and comprehensive weekly reporting on OD stats.	\$310,000
9	Drug Checking	Drug checking has been identified as a key aspect of the response to opioid overdose deaths. Initial testing is underway at Insite with fentanyl detection dipsticks, and other technologies have been identified for consideration. Evaluation of drug checking approaches also necessary.	People who use drugs, including people who use occasionally and who are at risk of accidental exposure to fentanyl and other contaminants	Ability to test street drugs for contaminants and reduce fentanyl and other contaminants exposure.	\$110,000
10	Naloxone	Naloxone kits for families and friends of people at risk of an opioid overdose. These funds will facilitate access to naloxone kits through public health units.	Families and friends of people at risk of an opioid overdose	Greater availability of naloxone in the community.	\$60,000

**Many of these strategies will be delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Health and other key stakeholders*

Total \$5,000,000