

SUPPLEMENTAL ESTIMATES NOTE: PATHWAYS CLOSURE

1. WHY IS THE MINISTRY ANNOUNCEING NEW INVESTMENTS IN SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES YET CLOSING LONGSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICES LIKE PATHWAYS?

- As part of the historic investment of \$500M in mental health services, Budget 2021 includes \$330 million over the fiscal plan to strengthen adult substance use services across the continuum in all corners of the province.
- Through this investment, we are working to build a system of care so people can access coordinated and seamless services.
- Interior Health's decision to end the contract with Pathways and bring those services in house doesn't mean a reduction in services. This change is taking place to improve mental health and substance use services in the area, better integrating them into the continuum of care which will enabling Interior Health to expand, strengthen and increase programs for people who need them.
- No services are being reduced, in fact programs will increase, and Interior Health is committed to ensuring the client transition is seamless and supported.
- Bringing these services in house also ensures people will access substance use services that are better integrated with primary care and additional available substance use and mental health services and supports.

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2. IS THE CLOSURE OF PATHWAYS GOING TO MEAN FEWER SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS OF PENTICTON?

- No services will be reduced as a result of this change, see Q1 response

3. INTERIOR HEALTH COMMENTED THAT PATHWAYS WAS DEFUNDED BECAUSE 'RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT IS NOT EFFECTIVE'. IS THAT THE POSITION OF THIS GOVERNMENT?

- We have been clear that there are different paths to recovery. The role of MMHA is to ensure that people who are accessing services can find quality, safe, and person-centered options. For some that may be harm reduction, for others medication assisted treatment, for others bed-based treatment and recovery services.
- Cross-reference supplemental 7. Investments in Bed Based Treatment for more details on how the government supporting access to bed-based treatment and recovery services.

4. THE MINISTER HAS SAID IT WAS INTERIOR HEALTHS DECISION TO CLOSE PATHWAYS, WHY ISN'T THE PROVINCE MAKING THESE CRITICAL DECISIONS? ISN'T THAT THE ROLE OF MMHA?

- This government is committed to working in partnership with the regional health authorities to provide strategic direction and inform investments, ensuring a full continuum of care is available for all British Columbians.

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- Health Authorities have the autonomy to determine what services and supports will address the needs of all people who reside in their region.
- We are confident that regional health authorities are best placed to determine the specific needs of their communities and we continue to work closely with them to ensure a full range of services are available, including harm reduction services, counselling services, out-patient supports and residential treatment beds.

5. DOES THE MINISTER AGREE WITH INTERIOR HEALTH'S DECISION TO DEFUND PATHWAYS?

- See Q4 for response

6. WHAT IS THIS GOVERNMENT DOING TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH OKANAGAN ARE ABLE TO ACCESS APPROPRIATE SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES?

- This government is working to build a system of care that services are available and accessible to anyone who needs them.
- Budget 2021 includes funding for 195 new substance use treatment and recovery beds to help more people get on a path to recovery.
- We will be working closely with health authorities to plan and implement these new services.

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- Interior Health's approach to bringing counselling supports in-house promotes seamless integration care.
- We have been assured by Interior Health that there will be no drop in services for the clients as they are transitioned from Pathways to Interior Health services.
- Our Ministry will continue to support organizations that provide quality treatment and recovery services to people.

7. HOW MANY RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT BEDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF PENTICTON RIGHT NOW?

- As of March 2021, there are 215 adult and youth health authority community substance use beds in Interior Health (cross reference supplemental 6: Substance Use Bed Numbers)
- Health authorities plan services, taking into consideration the needs of the entire region. Beds are not typically reserved for just one community.
- In addition to health authority funded beds, in 2020/21, MMHA also provided grant funding to increase access to publicly funded bed across BC, including in the interior. (Cross reference supplemental 7: Investments in Bed Based Treatment and Recovery Services for a full list of funded services in the Interior)

8. BUDGET 2021 INCLUDES A SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES. WHAT NEW

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SERVICES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF PENTICTON?

- Budget 2021 includes a broad range of critical investments across the full substance use continuum of care. Over the coming months we will be working closely with health authorities to plan and begin to implement these new services.
- Confirming services locations is an important part of the planning process and will take into consideration current services gaps and the needs of underserved communities and peoples.

9. WHAT IS THIS GOVERNMENT DOING TO ENSURE THAT OTHER BED-BASED TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SERVICES LOCATED IN INTERIOR HEALTH ARE NOT DEFUNDED?

- People need different services and supports at different points in their wellness journey. We are committed to providing access to a continuum of quality care options that respects individual choice.
- We cannot afford to focus on one approach over another. That is why we are investing in all areas along the continuum of care, that includes harm reduction, out-patient, mobile treatment, and recovery beds and treatment facilities.
- In the last two months Interior Health has added 20 youth treatment beds, as part of our commitment to doubling the number of treatment beds across the province, and has stood

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up 27 new adults beds, all funded by the province and implemented by Interior Health.

- As part of the historic investment of \$500M in mental health services, Budget 2021 includes \$330 million over the fiscal plan to provide a full spectrum of substance-use treatment and recovery services.
- 195 new substance use treatment and recovery beds will be implemented in communities throughout the province to help more people on a path to recovery and we will be working closely with health authorities to plan and implement these new services.

"We understand a recent media story about substance use treatment options in Penticton is causing concern and we would like to offer clarification.

"Interior Health's position is that inpatient treatment services are an important part of the overall continuum of care for people living with substance use.

"Interior Health recognizes every person's experience of addiction and recovery is unique, and we offer and support a range of evidence-based treatment approaches tailored to an individual's specific needs, and this certainly may include inpatient treatment options.

"We apologize for any confusion the comments in this article has caused, and we have requested the story's author correct the inaccurate content that was published.

"Interior Health's full scope of mental health and substance use services, including inpatient programs, are available here:

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourCare/MentalHealthSubstanceUse/SubstanceUse/Pages/default.aspx>

"Interior Health held a contract with Pathways Addictions Services to provide substance use counselling services in Penticton. Effective June 1, these services will be transitioned to Interior Health. We can assure the community that no services are being reduced. This change is being made to improve mental health and substance use services in the area, better integrating them into the continuum of care which will enable us to expand, strengthen and increase programs for people who need them.

"You may also be interested to know across IH mental health and substance use services for people throughout the Interior continue to develop. Integrated Treatment Teams are working throughout IH to embed multidisciplinary outreach to people who need flexible support that works for them. New treatment beds are coming this spring to serve youth experiencing substance use issues; access to Opioid Agonist Treatment is expanding, with the first cohort of Interior Health's nurse prescribers for Suboxone having just completed training; and access to community mental health services has improved with the launch of the 310-MHSU phone number for referrals to receive care"

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Interior Health

IH Communications Issues Note

Mar. 16, 2021

Topic

Substance use counselling service in SOK - Pathways

Summary

- Following a review of the substance use counselling services provided by Pathways Addictions Resource Center in Penticton, Interior Health has made the decision not to continue three contracts with the agency.
- The review, conducted by IH in the fall of 2020, included consultations with and written feedback from several partners, including:
 - s.22 local service organizations and Interior Health clinicians. Key themes raised included s.13
 - s.13
 - s.13 (Service organizations consulted included: s.22
 - s.22
- Service partners and clinicians who work with Pathways
 - s.13

- Direct engagement and consultation with current Pathways clients for the purpose of this review was limited, due to client confidentiality.
- Based on the findings of the review, and past unsuccessful attempts to engage with Pathways to address challenges, Interior Health notified Pathways on Feb. 2 that their current contracts would not be renewed. Effective June 1, Interior Health will assume the services and provide substance use counselling to clients in the South Okanagan.
- Planning is in progress at IH to ensure clients are supported in their transition, and to implement changes that will strengthen overall access to the full continuum of substance use services available.
- This includes a weekly meeting between Pathways' executive director and members of its board of directors.
- Pathways has responded by challenging the decision in the media and telling clients that they will be left without service and support.

Key Messages

- Interior Health is shifting substance use counselling services in the South Okanagan from an external contract to internally operated services, effective June 1.
- This change is being made to improve mental health and substance use services in the area, better integrating them into the continuum of care which will enable us to expand, strengthen and increase programs for people who need them.
- We can assure the community that no services are being reduced, in fact programs will increase, and we are committed to ensuring the client transition is seamless and supported.
- There will be no drop in services for the clients as they are transitioned from Pathways to Interior Health services.
- Shifting substance use counselling services into Interior Health allows us to distribute the resources more broadly across the South Okanagan and to be more nimble in the response to changing client needs and evidence-based practice.
- This change comes as Interior Health and our partners are making other investments in the area to support clients of mental health and substance use services, including enhancements in local primary care and enhanced harm reduction and overdose response services.
- Interior Health has advised Pathways of this decision in early February.

Background

Overview:

- Substance use counselling services in the South Okanagan are currently contracted out to Pathways, with the main service area focused in Penticton.
- The service contracts with Pathways are valued at approximately \$538,000 annually between three contracts, all of which have a contract end date of March 31, 2021.
- The current contracted service has minimal integration into primary care and Interior Health mental health and substance use services, and Pathways has not been receptive to making improvements.
- Interior Health advised Pathways on Feb. 2 that the three contracts will be terminated on May 31. As of June 1, substance use counselling services in the area will be provided by Interior Health directly.
- Full funding of contracts will continue during transition period ending June 1, 2021.

Benefit of repatriating services:

s.13

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s.13

Current Model vs. Proposed Model

	Current State (Contract)	Future State (IH)
Intake	s.13	
Access to service		
Team-based care		
Modalities		
Service Area		

Contact Information	
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Program Contact(s):	Jana Abetkoff, Director Clinical Operations
Prepared by:	Ashley Stewart, Communication Consultant

Harm reduction the focus of addictions services in Penticton, says Interior Health

Interior Health hopes to match services with a person's situation and their level of readiness

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Mar. 24, 2021 3:30 p.m.

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