



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Impact of Toxic Drug Emergency and COVID-19 on First Nations peoples in BC

Update on Life Expectancy & Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL)

20th February 2024



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Please note the information in this presentation

- is sensitive, can be difficult to process, and can elicit strong emotions
- represents individuals, families, and loved ones affected by the toxic drug emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic
- is NOT for publication or further dissemination without acquiring appropriate permissions



If you have **questions** about the data in this presentation, please **reach out** to the **Health Surveillance** team at Surveillance.Unit@fnha.ca

Data Sources

First Nations Client File (FNCF)



Identifies **Status and Status eligible** First Nations living in BC.

BC Coroner's Service:



Toxic drug poisoning deaths (2015-2023), linked to FNCF-2022

Regional Health Authority's line list:



COVID-19 related deaths, Feb 2020 – Mar 2022

BC Vital Statistics Agency:



COVID-19 related deaths, Apr 2022 - Dec 2023.

Life Expectancy of First Nations people in BC:



Sex-specific estimates, from Office of the Provincial Health Officer



First Nations Life Expectancy



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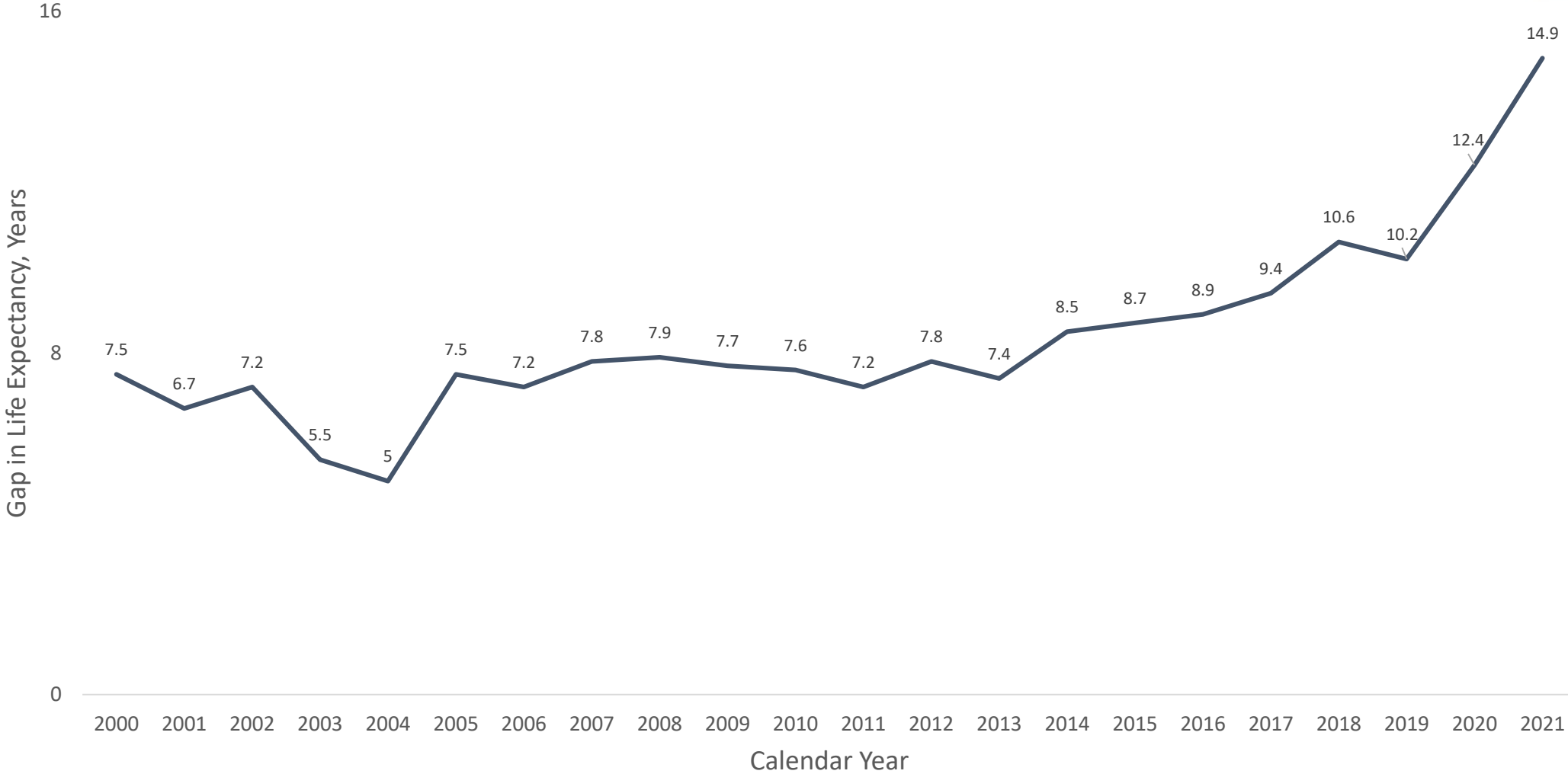


In **2021**, First Nations in British Columbia died, on average, **7.1 years** earlier than in **2015**

The Gap is Growing



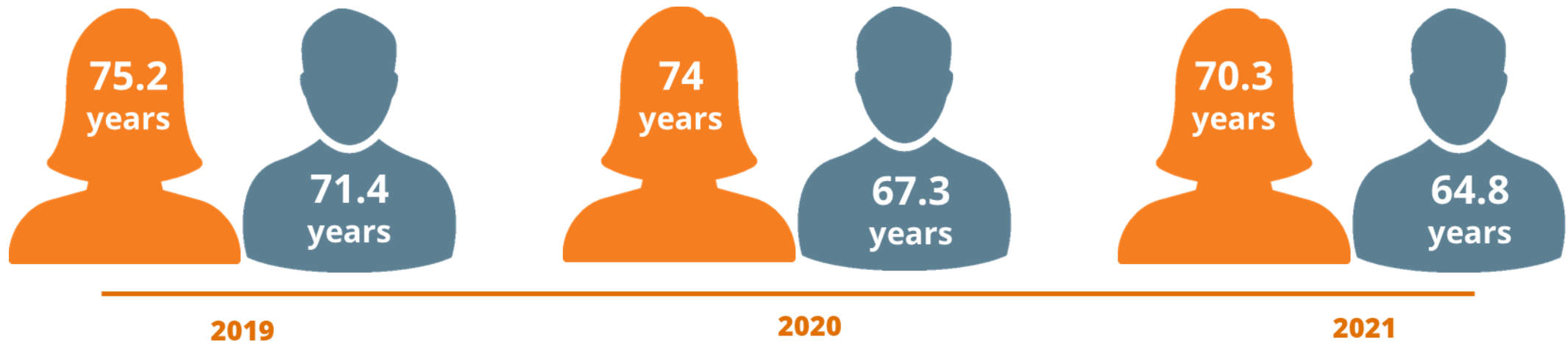
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Change in First Nations Life Expectancy During the COVID-19 Pandemic



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- Between 2019-2021
 - the toxic drug emergency had the greatest impact on decreased life expectancy for First Nations people, followed by COVID-19
 - life expectancy decreased by 6.6 years for First Nations men
 - life expectancy decreased by 4.9 years for First Nations women
 - By comparison, life expectancy decreased by 1.1 years for other residents

Years of Potential Life Lost (2020-2022)



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Average Years of Potential Life Lost per person (2020-2022)- COVID-19 and Toxic Drug Emergency



COVID-19

**11.2
years**



Toxic drugs

**32.7
years**

On average from Jan 2020 - Dec 2022:

- **293** persons might have lived **11.2** years longer if they hadn't died prematurely due to **COVID-19**.
- **1,034** persons might have lived **32.7** years longer if they hadn't died prematurely due to **toxic drugs**.
- **Toxic drug poisonings** resulted in **3.5 times** more deaths and **10.3 times** more Years of Potential Life Lost than COVID-19

Years of Potential Life Lost (2020-2022) – Looking at Toxic drugs and COVID-19 in more detail



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Toxic drug poisoning deaths among Status First Nations living in BC

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2020 – 2022 period
Total years of potential life lost, toxic drugs	2,245	3,734	5,405	7,219	4,696	8,612	11,634	13,601	33,847
Number of total deaths	62	108	165	206	129	268	361	405	1,034
Average years lost per person	36.2	34.6	32.8	35	36.4	32.1	32.2	33.6	32.7
Median age of death (overall)	37.0	41.0	42.0	38.0	37.0	40.0	42.0	39.0	39.5



COVID -related deaths among Status First Nations living in BC

	2020	2021	2022	2020 – 2022 period
Total years of potential life lost, COVID-19	251.6	2354	680.4	3,286
Number of total deaths	27	205	61	293
Average years lost per person	9.3	11.5	11.2	11.2
Median age of death (overall)	69	66	66	66



COVID-19: Tools and Lessons Learned



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- Understanding lessons learned from COVID-19 informs future responses to COVID outbreaks or other communicable diseases
- Some lessons learned include:
 1. Developing an all hazards plan to better respond to future possible pandemics/outbreaks
 2. Ensuring access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and accessible rapid tests for COVID testing to mitigate viral spread
 3. Encourage community members to access vaccinations and keep vaccinations up to date.
 4. Support safety measures such as staying home when sick.



Toxic Drug Emergency Response Tools

- Ceremony, Culture, Land-Based Healing to build connection and support grief and healing
- FNHA Harm Reduction Hub
 - Ordering Naloxone
 - Safer Use Supplies e.g., Harm reduction supplies for safer smoking, insufflation (snorting), and injection
 - Drug Testing Strips
- Care Cupboards
- Engage with Peer Networks
- Drug Alerts*
- Lifeguard and BeSafe App
- Emergency Treatment Beds Pathways
- Connecting with eOPS/OPS services
- Check out [FNHA's Toxic Drug Emergency Community Support Guide](#)



Toxic Drug Emergency Planning Tools



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- Nurse Prescribing/OAT Access
- Emergency Safer Use Planning
- Establishing OPS/eOPS/Mobile Services
- Harm Reduction Vending Machines
- Developing Peer Networks
- Education and Awareness Raising
- Addressing Stigma around Substance Use
 - Courageous Conversations Toolkit
- Support with Grief and Healing
 - Healing Indigenous Hearts Toolkit
- Health and Wellness Summit May 7-9th 2024





Thank you!

Gayaxsixa (Hailhzaqvla)

Kw'as ho:y (Halq'eméyem)

Mussi Cho (Kaska Dena)

Huy tseep q'u (Stz'uminus)

Huy ch q'u (Hul'qumi'num)

Tooyksim niin (Nisga'a)

Haaw'a (Haida)

Kwuk^wstéyp (Nlaka'pamux)

Kukwstsétsemc

(Secwepemc)

Gila'kasla (Kwakwaka'wakw)

HÍSWKE (Sen'cōten)

ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ (Ayajuthem)

Kleco (Nuu-Chah-Nulth)

Sechanalyagh (Tsilhqot'in)

Snachailya (Dakelh)

T'oyaxsim nisim (Gitxsan)

Mental Health and Wellness Support



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KUU-US CRISIS LINE SOCIETY

ADULTS: 250-723-4050

YOUTH: 250-723-2040

TOLL FREE: 1-800-588-8717



KUU-US Crisis Line Society works and operates on the unceded territory of Tseshaht and Hupacasath

HOPE FOR WELLNESS



1-855-242-3310

Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society

Cultural Support and Counselling: 1-888-403-3123

