First Nations people are disproportionately represented in toxic drug deaths.

- **3.3%** of BC’s population
- **11.8%** in 2019
- **14.7%** in 2020

14.7% of all toxic drug deaths in 2020 were First Nations people. This number was 11.8% in 2019.

2020: 254 First Nations people died

The highest number of toxic drug deaths since 2015

2019: 116 First Nations people died

First Nations people died at 5.3 times the rate of other BC residents in 2020

First Nations people died at 3.9 times the rate of other BC residents in 2019

First Nations women died at 9.9 times the rate of other female BC residents

First Nations men died at 4.3 times the rate of other male BC residents

2020 recorded the highest number of deaths among both men and women

11.8% in 2019

32.3% of First Nations people who died in 2020 were women

16.6% of other BC residents who died were women

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This topic may trigger unpleasant feeling or thoughts. If you need emotional support, please contact the 24 hour KUU-US Crisis Line at 1-800-588-8717

First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness
### ACTIONS TAKEN BY FNHA TO PREVENT TOXIC DRUG DEATH

#### PREVENT PEOPLE FROM DYING

- **Distribution of naloxone (nasal spray and injectable):** The FNHA dispensed 18,484 doses of nasal naloxone spray to individuals through community pharmacies, and 4,215 nasal naloxone kits to 90+ First Nations communities through bulk ordering in 2020 (each kit contains two doses); worked with health system partners to distribute 7,943 injectable naloxone kits to 159 FNHA take-home naloxone sites from April to Dec. 2020 (each kit contains three doses).
- **Grants to harm reduction champions:** distributed 17 community grants of $2,500 each

#### KEEP PEOPLE SAFE WHEN USING

- **Harm Reduction Policy:** Approved Policy in January 2021 with five key action areas, including provision of Indigenous harm reduction services, expansion of substitution therapies, and support of pharmaceutical alternatives to toxic street drugs
- **Not Just Naloxone training:** More than 100 people completed two-day virtual NJN training sessions
- **Commitment in place to hire** 10 Indigenous Harm Reduction Educators and 10 Peer Coordinators to serve First Nations communities across the province

#### CREATE AN ACCESSIBLE RANGE OF TREATMENT OPTIONS

- **Opioid agonist therapy (OAT):** FNHA has supported 21 rural and remote First Nations communities to improve access to treatment options for opioid use disorder, including OAT; registered nurse prescribing planning is underway in seven communities
- **FNHA’s Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service** was launched in the summer of 2020 and provides access to addictions specialists for assessments, treatment planning, access to OAT, withdrawal management, and pharmaceutical alternatives
- **Indigenous treatment and land-based healing services that are grounded in cultural teachings:** 147 sites providing mental health and addictions services
- **First Nations Treatment and Healing Centres:** Revitalization of six existing treatment centers and construction of new healing centres in Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Salish regions
- **OAT clinic fees:** 223 people received subsidies to access OAT at medical clinics

#### SUPPORT PEOPLE ON THEIR HEALING JOURNEYS

- **Difficult Conversations Webinar Series:** Hosted four webinars and encouraged 450+ people to lean into difficult conversations about substance use. The webinars encourage family members, friends and loved ones to share their challenges in accessing harm reduction services and supports, and reframe the discussion to include Indigenous strengths and self-determination.
- **Indigenous Harm Reduction Community Council:** Developed a province-wide network of Indigenous people working on Indigenous approaches to harm reduction and providing knowledge sharing across all regions
- **Unlocking the Gates:** Supported 188 people during their release from incarceration to address the strong link between transitioning out of correctional facilities and subsequent toxic drug events and deaths
- **Promoting culturally safe services:** Increased partnerships with Indigenous service providers and health system partners to address cultural safety and systemic anti-Indigenous racism in health services provided to Indigenous people