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Introduction

First Nations people have been disproportionately represented in toxic drug poisoning events and deaths in British Columbia (BC) due to the ongoing legacy of colonialism. Despite this, communities continue to show resiliency and strength in their approaches to healing and taking care of each other. As a partner in health and wellness, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) continues to work with BC First Nation individuals, families and communities to identify needs surrounding the toxic drug emergency, and to offer supports and services to address those needs in a culturally safe and trauma-informed way.

The FNHA has developed both provincial and regional strategies to ensure timely and effective supports are in place for the development of harm reduction programming. Communities are encouraged to continue to identify gaps through their regional communication pathways. The FNHA will work with communities to address the gaps that fall within our ability and will advocate for additional resources for First Nations communities with our government and non-government partners.

This guide represents the areas of support that the FNHA has determined to be within the scope of our toxic drug emergency response and within our capacity as an organization to, effectively, fulfill. This document will be updated as our response unfolds.

Supports for Communities

Harm Reduction Supplies & Education

The FNHA’s [Harm Reduction Hub](#) facilitates access to harm reduction supplies at no cost to First Nations communities. These supplies include:

- Intramuscular (Injectable - IM) Naloxone Kits.
- Nasal Naloxone Kits (Limited: up to 50 kits per order).
- [Harm Reduction Supplies](#) (Including safer injection, smoking, snorting and safer sex supplies).
- Fentanyl test strips.
Education and training are available and can be delivered virtually or in person. Topics may include:

- Understanding harm reduction supplies (safer smoking, snorting, injection, and safer sex supplies).
- Harm Reduction supply distribution planning, including how to connect with people who use drugs.
- IM and Nasal Naloxone administration including how to prevent, recognize and respond to a toxic drug poisoning.
- Support with the development of a policy for naloxone distribution.
- Drug checking with fentanyl test strips.

To order harm reduction supplies, or for harm reduction education support contact harmreduction@fnha.ca

Education & Training

Not Just Naloxone (NJN) Workshop

The Not Just Naloxone: Talking about Substance Use in First Nations Communities is a 2-day in-person or virtual train-the-trainer workshop hosted by the FNHA and is delivered by the Four Directions team, FNHA Regional teams, and community harm reduction champions.

The NJN workshop teaches participants to facilitate community-based discussions about:

- Racism and prohibition in Canada
- Decolonizing substance use
- Indigenous harm reduction practices
- Trauma- and resiliency-informed practice
- Anti-stigma work
- Nasal/injectable Naloxone

Kickstarter Grants of up to $2500 are available to support graduates of the NJN workshops to host virtual or in-person training events about harm reduction in First Nations communities.

To request NJN training for your community, contact njn@fnha.ca
Regional Education & Training
Additional education & training may be available through the FNHA regional teams. These can be tailored to individual community needs, and can cover a variety of harm reduction and health and wellness topics.

To learn more about education & training being offered in your region connect with your regional team or harmreduction@fnha.ca

Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT)
The FNHA provides support to both individuals and communities to access OAT including Methadone, Buprenorphine/Naloxone (Suboxone), Slow-release Oral Morphine (Kadian), and Sublocade. These supports can include:

- Community education and stigma reduction regarding OAT.
- Building relationships with existing local OAT prescribers and pharmacies.
- Supporting Opioid Use Disorder and Opioid Agonist Therapy.
- Supporting Nurse Prescribing of OAT.
- Support with OAT clinic fee subsidy.
- Supporting individuals with medical transportation to access their OAT medications.

A one-time OAT access grant of up to $15,000 is available to communities that would like to develop OAT programming or enhance existing supports.

Prescribed Safer Supply
Prescribed safer supply is a harm reduction approach that provides individuals who rely on the illicit and toxic drug supply with a range of regulated, predictable, pharmaceutical grade alternatives through a health care provider.

FNHA can support Individuals and communities to learn more about prescribed safer supply in their area.

To learn more about OAT programming, Nurse Prescribing, Prescribed Safer Supply and the OAT access grants contact 4directions@fnha.ca
Collaborating With and Learning From People with Lived and Living Experience

People with lived and living experience (PWLLE) of substance use are those community members who use substances, or have a history of substance use, and hold expert knowledge around the harm reduction needs of the community. There are a variety of ways that PWLLE can support harm reduction programming in community.

When collaborating and learning from PWLLE it is essential to read and follow the Principles and Best Practices for Peer Engagement and Peer Payment Standard.

Establishing a Peer Network

PWLLE of substance use in your community can be supported to develop a peer network that will allow them to build relationships, skills, and a network of support.

There are a number of Peer Networks that already exist across BC.

Funding opportunities are available for communities who would like incorporate PWLLE into harm reduction programming, or to support the development of a peer network.

To learn more about collaborating with PWLLE and for information and support on establishing a peer network contact harmreduction@fnha.ca

Drug Alerts and Overdose Advisories

Drug alerts and overdose advisories are a way of communicating information about a drug sample that may be harmful, or to alert the community when there is an increase in people who are having unexpected effects when using substances. Having a template or script ready to go will help the alert to get out as quickly and efficiently as possible. Drug alerts can be communicated in a variety of ways including:

- Posters around the community
- Social media
- Email
- Radio

Information on how to develop a drug alert/overdose advisory can be found here.
Individuals can access free and anonymous toxic drug alerts across BC. To sign up for this service text the word “JOIN” to 253787 (ALERTS).

Using Social Media for Harm Reduction Information
Social media, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter can be used to communicate important harm reduction and safety information to the community.

Tips for safe and effective communication through social media include:

- Use non-stigmatizing language including these tips on talking about substance use to maintain dignity and respect.
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality in posts – for example do not include names or addresses.
- Post fact-based information.
- Always include links to supports for people who might be affected by the information including mental health and crisis support, harm reduction strategies, and where to access naloxone in the community (Including after hours).

For information and support on developing drug alerts and/or overdose advisories contact harmreduction@fnha.ca

Emergency Safer Use Planning
One of the biggest risks for toxic drug poisoning is using substances alone or in isolation. Developing an emergency safer use plan in your community, alongside PWLLE, can help to support community members who use drugs to do so in a safer and supported way. This may include:

- Distribution of cell phones with safety monitoring apps including Lifeguard App or Be Safe App installed (Both of these apps require reliable wifi to function properly) or the National Overdose Response Service (NORS) number.
- Auntie/Uncle/Cousin Program: Designated safe space in community for people to use their substances.
- Development of a Raven’s Eye Sage Site: A First Nations led overdose prevention site that offers wrap-around services along with harm reduction and overdose prevention programs.
- Locations for “after hours” naloxone kits and harm reduction supplies.

Funding is available through the FNHA to support emergency safer use planning, including the development of Raven’s Eye Sage Sites.

For Information and support on developing emergency safer use planning and to learn more about funding available contact harmreduction@fnha.ca
Grief and Loss Supports
Grief and loss supports are available through FNHA regional teams to individuals, families, and communities who have lost loved ones to the toxic drug emergency. Supports can be tailored to meet the community's needs and may include:

- 1:1 crisis counselling.
- Community grief and loss workshops.
- Ceremonies to honor lost loved ones.

Additionally, the FNHA has created a safe and welcoming digital space called “Honouring Lost Loved Ones” for friends and family members to remember, honour, and grieve loved ones that they have lost due to the toxic drug emergency.

The FNHA provides one-time yearly funding for communities who would like to recognize International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st in their community.

Mental Health and Cultural Supports
Culturally safe and trauma informed mental health and crisis supports are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week for First Nations people in BC.

In addition, the FNHA provides mental health benefits for counselling services provided by qualified mental health providers including psychologists, clinical counsellors and social workers.

For additional information on grief and loss and mental health and cultural supports available to your community contact your regional team.

Urban and Away From Home Supports
Harm reduction supports are available to community members who are living away from their home community and using substances. These supports include:

Harm Reduction Supplies: Harm reduction supplies are available throughout BC at no cost to anyone who needs them. To learn where to access harm reduction supplies in your area click here.

IM Naloxone: IM Naloxone kits are available throughout BC at no cost to anyone who needs them. To learn where to access IM naloxone kits in your area click here.

Nasal Naloxone: is available at no cost to those with a personal health number and Status number in pharmacies in BC. For information on how to access nasal naloxone at a pharmacy click here.

Drug Checking: There are a range of drug checking services available across BC including in-person and mail-in options. See Appendix C for drug checking options in your region.
Substance Use Treatment Options

Detox and Withdrawal Management
To learn more about detox and withdrawal management options in your area see Appendix B and “Withdrawal Management” or connect with your FNHA regional team.

FNHA Funded Treatment Centres
The FNHA supports Individuals of all genders, as well as youth and families who are on their healing journey to access treatment services.

Visit the FNHA treatment centre page to learn more and to access the application form.

Non-FNHA Funded Treatment Services
In situations where an individual is not able to attend an FNHA funded treatment centre they can be supported to access a non-FNHA treatment centre. For more information on this process and eligibility requirements please review the Treatment Centre Application FAQ document.

Virtual Supports

FNHA Virtual Doctor of the Day
1-855-344-3800 (Toll-free, 7 days a week 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day

FNHA Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service
Provides virtual specialist support in addictions medicine and psychiatry. FNHA Virtual Doctor of the Day, or your usual medical professional, can refer you to the Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service.
Appendix A: FNHA Harm Reduction Resources

- FNHA Harm Reduction Hub
- Overdose Prevention & Harm Reduction: Support Others
- A Framework for Action: Responding to the Toxic Drug Crisis for First Nations
- Supporting Opioid Use Disorder and Opioid Agonist Therapy in First Nations Communities (Resource developed to support nurses working in First Nations Communities)
- FNHA Harm Reduction Policy Statement
- FNHA Harm Reduction Policy Supplement 1 of 3: The Context for the FNHA’s Policy on Harm Reduction
- FNHA Harm Reduction Policy Supplement 2 of 3: Why Harm Reduction
- FNHA Harm Reduction Policy Supplement 3 of 3: What is Harm Reduction
Appendix B – Regional Health Authority Harm Reduction Resources

The FNHA works in partnership with the regional health authorities to help advocate for the delivery of culturally safe and trauma-informed harm reduction services. Below is a list of our health authority partners’ substance use and harm reduction services by region.

**Northern Health:**
Northern Health Harm Reduction Information and Resources | Overdose Prevention | Services by Community | Mental Health and Substance Use | Drug Alerts | Withdrawal Management | Indigenous Health Supports

**Interior Health:**
Harm Reduction Partner Information | Harm Reduction | Overdose Prevention and Treatment | Adult Substance Use Services and Resources | Substance Use Wheel | Opioid Agonist Therapy | Drug Alerts | Withdrawal Management | Indigenous Health Supports

**Fraser Health:**
Harm Reduction | Harm Reduction Resources | Mental Health and Substance Use Services | Opioid Agonist Treatment | Drug Alerts | Withdrawal Management | Indigenous Health Supports

**Vancouver Coastal Health:**
Harm Reduction | Substance Use Services | Opioid Addiction and Treatment | Drug Alerts | Withdrawal Management | Indigenous Health Supports

**Island Health:**
Overdose Prevention Services | Substance Use and Addiction | Opioid Agonist Therapy | Safer Prescribing Options | Drug Alerts | Withdrawal Management | Indigenous Health Supports
Appendix C: Drug Checking and Overdose Prevention Site Locations

In-Person Drug Checking Options:

Northern Health: Click here for drug checking in Prince George and here for Terrace.

Interior Health: Click here for the full list of drug checking services.

Fraser Salish: Click here for the full list of drug checking services.

Vancouver Coastal: Click here for the full list of drug checking services.

Vancouver Island: Click here for the full list of drug checking services supported through the Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project. Click here for drug checking in Nanaimo.

Mail-in Drug Checking Options:

Get Your Drugs Tested is based in Vancouver and instructions for how to use this mail-in services can be found here.

The Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project is based out of Victoria and instructions for how to use this mail-in service can be found here.

Overdose Prevention Sites/Supervised Consumption Sites:

For a list of overdose preventions sites and supervised consumption sites in your area use this link.
Appendix D: Additional Harm Reduction Resources

Mobile Response Team:

- Provincial Overdose Mobile Response Team

Resources for Pregnant and Parenting People

- Perinatal Substance Use
- Families in Recovery Program (FIR) (Vancouver)
- Heartwood Centre for Women (Vancouver)
- Peardonville House (Abbotsford)
- Harmony House (Prince George)
- Sheway (Vancouver)
- Herway Home (Victoria)

Youth Resources:

- Child and Youth Mental Health & Substance Use Resources
- Foundry BC
- YouthCo
- Youth Substance Use Treatment Program

Provincial Harm Reduction Supports

- Toward the Heart Website
- Harm Reduction Services
- Harm Reduction Clinical Resources

Education and Training Opportunities

- BC Center on Substance Use
- Canadian Red Cross: First Aid for Opioid Emergencies & Becoming an Opioid Harm Reduction Champion.