



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Toxic Drug Poisoning Trends among First Nations Youth (aged 15-29) Interior Region



Colonization and intergenerational trauma have negatively impacted First Nations' health, including increased harms caused by toxic drug poisoning. Note that the data presented here is sensitive in nature and represents individuals, their families and loved ones.

Toxic drug poisoning events

Provincial comparison and regional overview

Between 2021 and 2024:

Interior First Nations youth experienced the following number of events in each year:

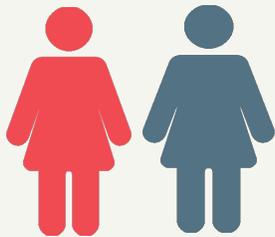


33.5%

Interior First Nations youth made up 33.5 per cent of all toxic drug events among First Nations people in the region in 2021-2024.

Comparison to other residents in the Interior Region

In 2024:

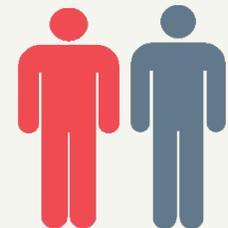


11.5x

The rate of toxic drug events among First Nations female youth was 11.5 times higher than other resident female youth.

The rate of toxic drug events among First Nations male youth was 6.5 times higher than other resident male youth.

6.5x

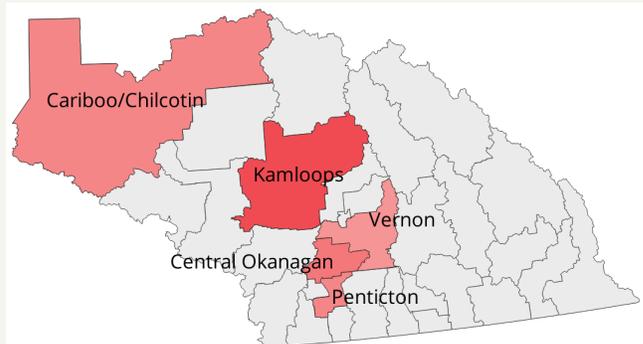


Geography

Between 2023 and 2024:

The highest number of toxic drug events among First Nations youth in the Interior Region was reported in:

- Kamloops = 166
- Central Okanagan = 55
- Cariboo / Chilcotin = 45
- Penticton = 38
- Vernon = 28





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Toxic drug poisoning deaths

Provincial comparison and regional overview

Between 2023 and 2024:



Interior First Nations youth experienced 33 toxic drug deaths, out of a total 182 deaths among BC First Nations youth.

25.8%

Interior First Nations youth made up 25.8 per cent of the region's total youth deaths in 2023/24, even though they only make up 6.7 per cent of the Interior youth population.

Female youth in the Interior Region

Between 2021* and 2024:



37.7%

First Nations female youth made up 37.7 per cent of First Nations youth toxic drug deaths in the Interior Region.



23

First Nations female youth experienced 23 toxic drug deaths in the Interior Region (124 per 100,000 First Nations female youth).

Time trend

2023-
2024



Interior First Nations youth experienced 33 toxic drug deaths in 2023/24, compared to 28 toxic drug deaths in 2021/22.

2021-
2022



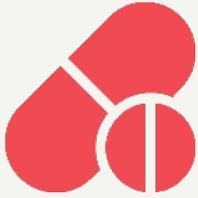
*A longer time frame is required to protect the anonymity of individuals represented in the data.



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Opioid use disorder (OUD)



338

There were an estimated 338 First Nations youth who had health care interactions* coded as being related to OUD in 2022.



0.3%

This number is a 0.3 per cent increase from 337 youth in 2021.

Alcohol use disorder (AUD)



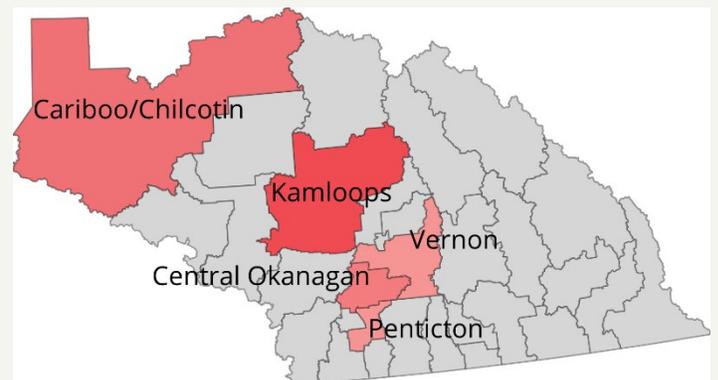
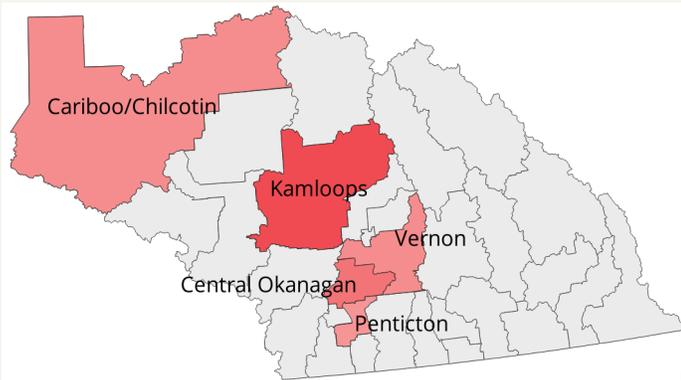
681

There were an estimated 681 First Nations youth who had health care interactions coded as being related to AUD in 2022.



0.6%

This number is a 0.6 per cent increase from 677 youth in 2021.



The number of First Nations youth who might have OUD in 2022, based on related health care interactions, was highest in:

- Kamloops = 110
- Central Okanagan = 69
- Cariboo / Chilcotin = 32
- Vernon = 28
- Penticton = 20

The number of First Nations youth who might have AUD in 2022, based on related health care interactions, was highest in:

- Kamloops = 166
- Cariboo / Chilcotin = 110
- Central Okanagan = 103
- Vernon = 51
- Penticton = 41



OUD and AUD related health care interactions

There were an estimated 136 First Nations youth who had health care interactions* coded as being related to both OUD and AUD in 2022.



7.5%

This number represents a 7.5 per cent decrease from 147 youth in 2021.

*The health care interactions were coded for AUD or OUD, but don't necessarily indicate a confirmed diagnosis.



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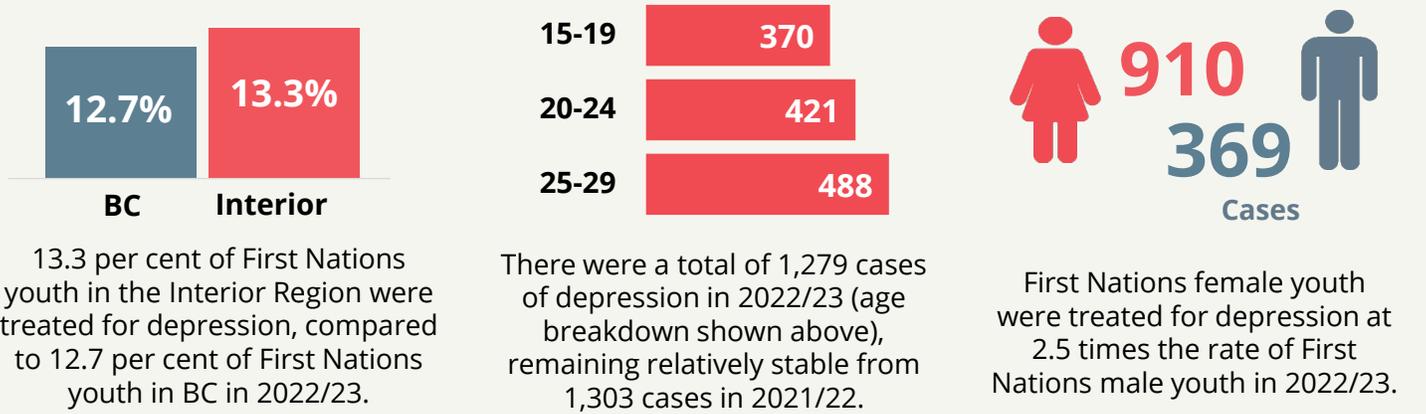
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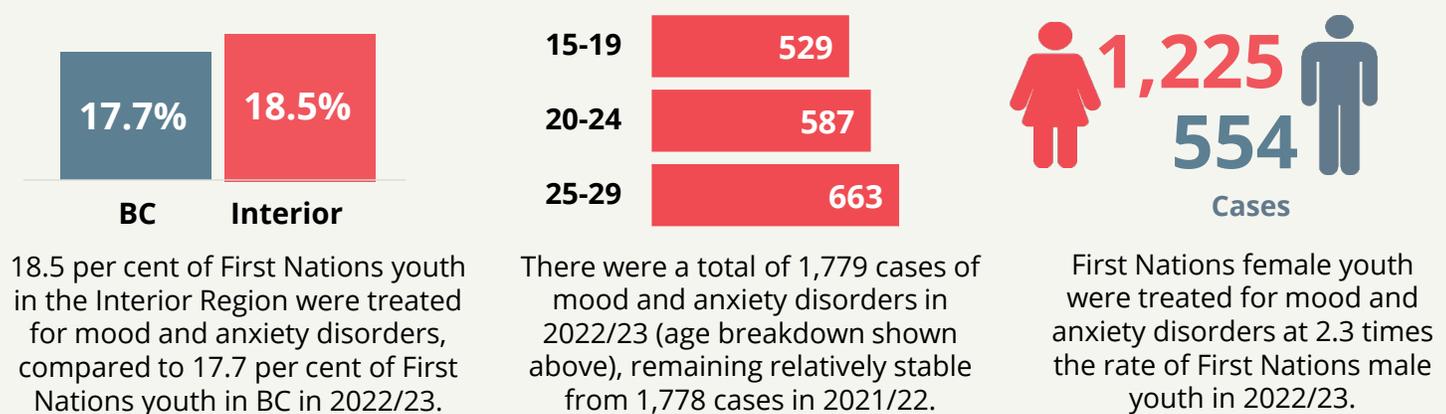
Mental health and hospital service use

Depression, mood and anxiety disorders, and health services use are examined due to their relationship with substance use.

Depression



Mood and anxiety disorders



Emergency departments (ED) and hospitalization use for mental health

For Interior First Nations youth:

62

There were 62 self-harm related hospitalizations in 2021/22.

568

568 First Nations youth used EDs for mental health-related reasons in 2022/23.



There were more First Nations female youth who were treated in the ED for mental health-related reasons than First Nations male youth in 2022/23.

Note: The mental health data in this iteration of this report is sourced from a different dataset than the previous iteration of this report with data up to 2020/21, therefore the numbers will not be directly comparable.