

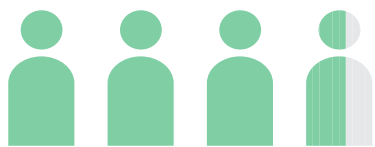
# TOXIC DRUG POISONING DEATHS AND EVENTS VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION

JANUARY - JUNE 2022



## TOXIC DRUG POISONING DEATHS

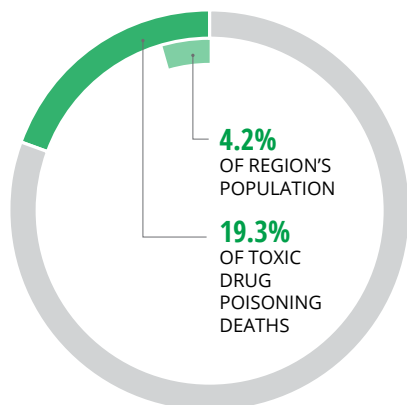
NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO DIED  
OF TOXIC DRUG POISONING



36

 EQUALS  
10 DEATHS

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE ARE  
DISPROPORTIONATELY REPRESENTED  
IN TOXIC DRUG POISONING DEATHS



## TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS

NUMBER OF  
TOXIC DRUG  
POISONING  
EVENTS ATTENDED  
BY PARAMEDICS

285

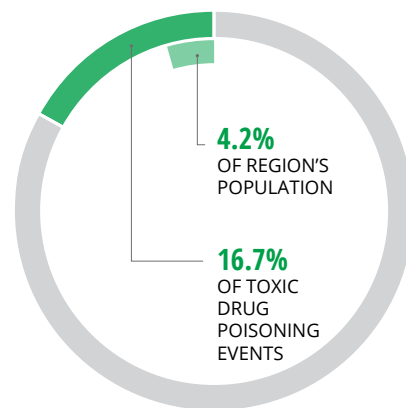
8.4↓

PERCENTAGE  
DECREASE COMPARED  
TO 2021 (JAN-JUNE)

PERCENTAGE OF EVENTS BY SEX



FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE ARE  
DISPROPORTIONATELY REPRESENTED  
IN TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS



### NOTES ABOUT TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS:

- Most toxic drug poisoning *events* are non-fatal and represent instances where paramedics were called and responded to an overdose, whereas toxic drug poisoning *deaths* represent people who overdosed and died.
- The negative impacts of single or repeated toxic drug poisoning events on an individual can include: heart conditions, liver and kidney problems, brain damage, decrease in mental health, disconnection from support networks, and loss of spiritual and/or cultural connections.  
Source: [www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/health-consequences-drug-misuse/introduction](http://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/health-consequences-drug-misuse/introduction)
- The data used to calculate the percentage of toxic drug poisoning events experienced by First Nations people is based only on health records where a Personal Health Number (PHN) was available. The number of First Nations toxic drug poisoning events attended by paramedics and the percentage increase in First Nations people experiencing events are likely underestimated due to the limited availability of PHNs in the data. Unfortunately, not all toxic drug poisoning events have a PHN associated with them.
- Toxic drug poisoning events that were treated successfully in community and events where 9-1-1 was not called are not captured in this data.



# RESPONDING TO AND HEALING FROM TOXIC DRUG SUPPLY POISONING

VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION JANUARY - JUNE 2022

## ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE FNHA TO SAVE LIVES AND SUPPORT HEALING

### Province-wide Initiatives:

- **Harm Reduction Hub** provides community workers and healthcare providers with easy access to harm reduction services and supplies. The 'Hub' also helps build networks of support to help expand harm reduction options in First Nation communities.
- **Opioid Agonist Therapy** is a medical harm reduction tool to help people through withdrawal from opioids. Email [harmreduction@fnha.ca](mailto:harmreduction@fnha.ca) to learn more.
- **Honouring Our Lost Loved Ones** is a digital space to honour and remember the loved ones we've lost to the toxic drug supply crisis. Stories can be shared via video, photo, artwork or audio recording.
- First Nations harm reduction grants funded 89 community-based events, harm reduction positions and projects. Email [HRgrants@fnha.ca](mailto:HRgrants@fnha.ca) to learn more.
- The **Courageous Conversations** tool kit is being developed to support ongoing community conversations about harm reduction, substance use and stigma.

- **From the Art** is a virtual art exhibit featuring artwork from people who have been personally affected by drug overdose. The exhibit is intended to spark new conversations surrounding substance use and the toxic drug crisis.

### Vancouver Island Region Initiatives:

- Provided 'Not Just Naloxone' workshops in communities with emerging harm reduction champions.
- Supported Kwakiutl's development of a harm reduction and wellness focused food truck, 'Auntie's Kitchen'.
- Supported Indigenous Outreach Workers Network in Victoria to provide services to First Nations people who use substances.
- Newly funded mobile harm reduction van with Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council based in Port Alberni.
- Planning underway with health system partners to establish response structures, including shared strategic work plans and initiatives.

## REGIONAL WELLNESS AND CULTURAL SUPPORTS

### Regional FNHA staff

**Harm Reduction Educator**  
Marlene.Stevens@fnha.ca

**Mental Wellness Liaison**  
Alexis.Stuart@fnha.ca

**Mental Health & Wellness Team Lead**  
Hannah.Watler@fnha.ca

### Emotional and Cultural Support

**Tsow Tun Le Lum Society** – Call 1-888-403-3123 (toll-free) or visit [www.tsowtunlelum.org](http://www.tsowtunlelum.org)

**Indian Residential School Crisis Line** is a national service for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their residential school experience. Call toll-free 1-866-925-4419.

**KUU-US Crisis Service** – Call 1-800-KUU-US17 (588-8717) for an immediate response. 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

**Métis Crisis Line** is a service of Métis Nation British Columbia. Call 1-833-MétisBC (1-833-638-4722)

**Hope for Wellness Help Line** offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention by phone or online chat. Call toll-free 1-855-242-3310 or start a confidential chat with a counsellor at [www.hopeforwellness.ca](http://www.hopeforwellness.ca)

## LEVEL 2 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Recognizing the severe impacts of the toxic drug emergency, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the FNHA has moved into a level 2 emergency response in alignment with the Emergency and Disaster Management and Business Continuity Policy. Level 2 status means:

- Enhanced coordination, including onboarding teams with special skill sets/areas of expertise
- Mobilization and re-assignment of resources or services required to support response
- Collaboration with partners to ensure communities can access culturally safe supports and services