



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# Toxic Drug Poisoning Trends among First Nations Youth (aged 15-29) Vancouver Island 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

Between 2018 and 2022:



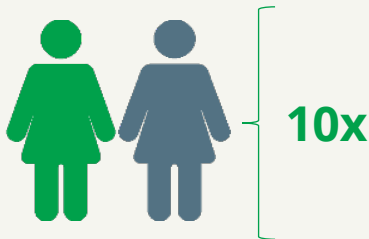
Vancouver Island First Nations youth experienced 902 paramedic-attended toxic drug events out of a total 4,412 events among BC First Nations youth

# 38%

Vancouver Island First Nations youth experienced over a third (38 per cent) of toxic drug events among First Nations people in the region

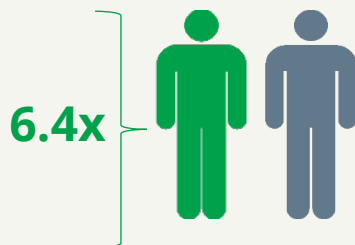
### Comparison to other residents In Vancouver Island region

In 2022:



The rate of toxic drug events among First Nations female youth was 10 times higher than other resident female youth

The rate of toxic drug events among First Nations male youth was 6.4 times higher than other resident male youth

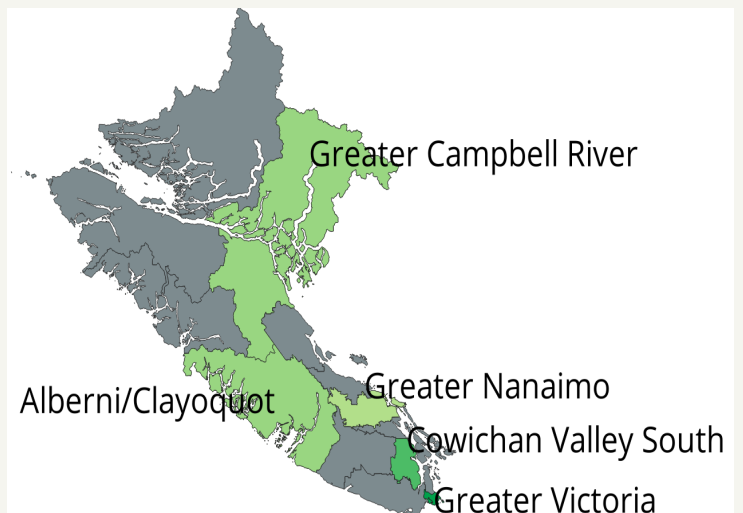


### Geography

Between 2018 and 2022:

The highest number of toxic drug events among First Nations youth in Vancouver Island was reported in:

- Greater Victoria = 258
- Cowichan Valley South = 200
- Greater Campbell River = 127
- Alberni-Clayoquot = 121
- Greater Nanaimo = 104





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## Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths

### Provincial comparison

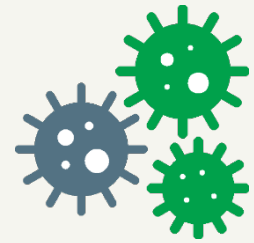
Between 2017 and 2022:



Vancouver Island First Nations youth experienced 69 toxic drug deaths, out of a total 318 among BC First Nations youth

# 27.4%

Vancouver Island First Nations youth made up 27.4 per cent of the region's total youth deaths, even though they only make up 6.5 per cent of the Vancouver Island youth population



Vancouver Island First Nations youth experienced increased rates of toxic drug deaths during the pandemic

## Female youth in the Vancouver Island region

Between 2017 and 2022:



# 48%

First Nations female youth made up 48 per cent of First Nations youth toxic drug deaths in Vancouver Island



# 33

First Nations female youth experienced 30 toxic drug deaths in Vancouver Island (108 deaths per 100,000)

## Geography

Between 2017 and 2022:

The highest number of toxic drug deaths among First Nations youth in Vancouver Island was reported in:

- Greater Victoria = 20
- Greater Nanaimo = 13





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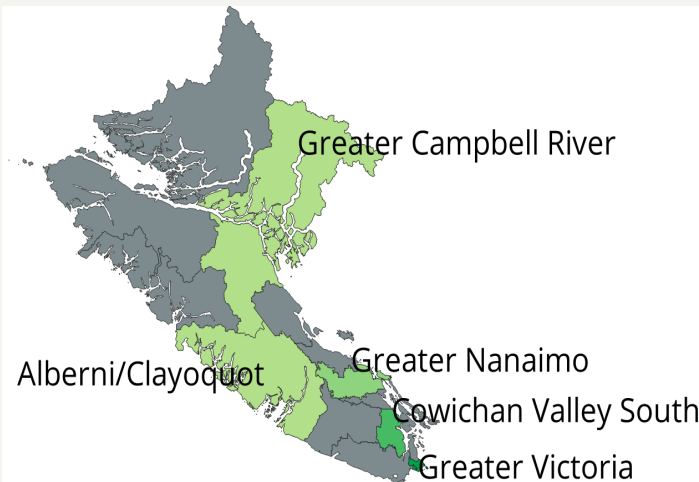
## Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)



There were an estimated 335 First Nations youth who had healthcare interactions\* coded as being related to OUD in 2021



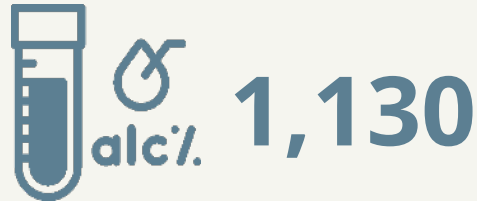
The percent of 20 to 24-year-olds who might have OUD based on related health care interactions increased to 3.5 per cent in 2021 from 2 per cent in 2017



The number of First Nations youth who might have OUD in 2021, based on related healthcare interactions was highest in:

- Greater Victoria = 84
- Cowichan Valley South = 63
- Greater Nanaimo = 47
- Greater Campbell River = 39
- Alberni/Clayoquot = 38

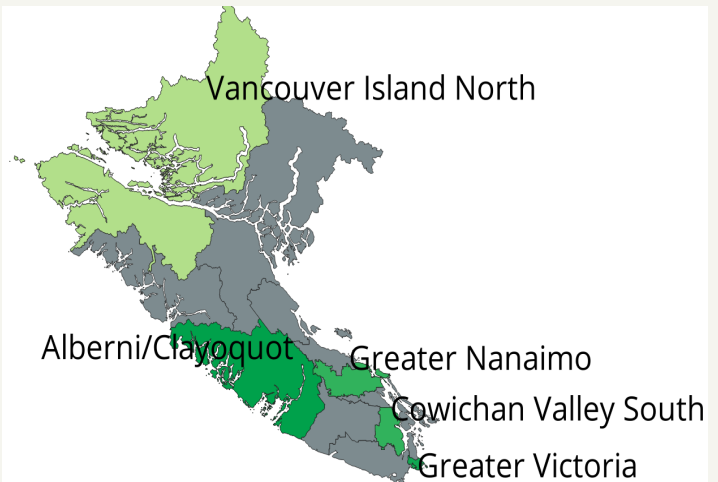
## Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)



There were an estimated 1,130 First Nations youth who had healthcare interactions coded as being related to AUD in 2021



The percent of 20 to 24-year-olds who might have AUD based on related health care interactions gradually decreased to 12.2 per cent in 2021 from 13.1 per cent in 2017



The number of First Nations youth who might have AUD in 2021, based on related healthcare interactions was highest in:

- Alberni/Clayoquot = 201
- Greater Victoria = 192
- Greater Nanaimo = 180
- Cowichan Valley South = 178
- Vancouver Island North = 96

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



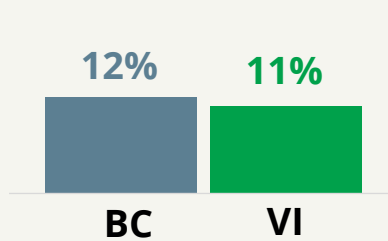
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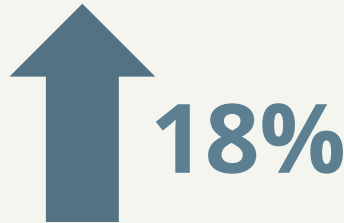
## Mental Health and Hospital Service use

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

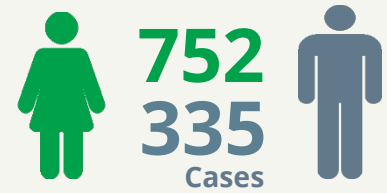
### Depression



11 per cent of First Nations youth in Vancouver Island region were treated for depression, compared to 12 per cent of First Nations youth in BC in 2020/21

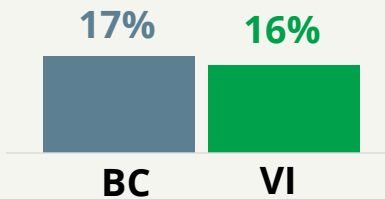


Between 2017 and 2020/2021, the number of First Nations youth dealing with depression increased by 18%

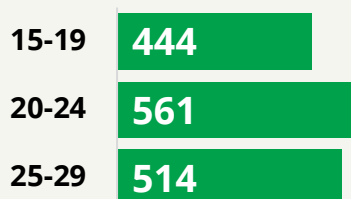


First Nations female youth were treated for depression 2.3 times more than First Nations male youth in 2020/21

### Mood and Anxiety Disorder



16 per cent of First Nations youth in Vancouver Island region were treated for Mood and Anxiety Disorder, compared to 17 per cent of First Nations youth in BC in 2020/21



Total cases of Mood and Anxiety Disorder were 1,519 in 2020/2021 (age breakdown shown above), an increase from 1,237 in 2017



First Nations female youth were treated for Mood and Anxiety Disorder 2.2 times more than First Nations male youth in 2020/21

### Emergency departments (ED) use for Mental Health

For First Nations youth in the Vancouver Island region in 2020/2021:

607

607 First Nations youth used EDs for mental health-related reasons



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

63

There were 63 self-harm related hospitalizations