

For Immediate Release | May 3, 2019

## Temporary changes to overdose prevention services in Kelowna

KELOWNA – Interior Health is advising the community that a temporary overdose prevention site (OPS) will be established downtown Kelowna, while mechanical problems on the RV that usually supports the Mobile Supervised Consumption Service (MSCS) are repaired.

Starting today, the OPS will operate daily 12:30 to 5 p.m. at 455 Leon Street, the same address where services have been provided downtown since the mobile site was established in 2017.

It is anticipated the temporary OPS will be required for one to two weeks. Once the RV has been repaired, normal operations will resume immediately.

A tent will be used to support the temporary OPS, similar to temporary structures used for overdose prevention in Nelson, Vancouver and on Vancouver Island. Additional security and staffing are being added to support the temporary OPS.

The RV is currently unsuitable for supervised consumption services due to mechanical issues with its levelers and slide-out which are impacting the stability and available space of the unit. The resulting instability and small space creates potential risks for clients and staff. The RV remains roadworthy and will be parked alongside the OPS site until it goes in for repairs, at which time it will be off the road for 1-3 days.

Supervised consumption services in Rutland are temporarily suspended until the repairs to the RV are complete. Harm reduction supplies and education will continue to be available at the Rutland location.

### **Q: Where will the temporary service be located?**

The temporary OPS will be located downtown where the MSCS has been operational since 2017, at 455 Leon Avenue in Kelowna. A tent will be used to support the OPS.

### **Q. When will it be in place?**

The temporary service will be fully in place on May 3rd and will be operational until the repairs are completed on the RV. It is expected the repairs will be completed in one to two weeks.

### **Q: Why is a temporary site necessary?**

There are people in our community that have come to trust and rely on the health care services offered at the MSCS. This gap in service creates a risk for people who use drugs who are looking to connect with the health care team for services and to reduce their risk of overdose death. Given the length of time required to properly address the RV's mechanical issues, a temporary site provides clients continued access to the overdose prevention services, and reduces risk of overdose and issues associated with drug use in our community.