



Urgent Overdose Concerns Notification Process

INTERIOR HEALTH | FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY | MÉTIS NATION BC

Purpose of this resource:

- Invite Indigenous Partners to escalate toxic drug concerns and initiate a collaborative response with IH, FNHA, and/or MNBC when experiencing increased overdose activity, anomalies in overdose events or deaths, or irregularities in the drug supply.

How Toxic Drug Information is Received

Provincial Reports/Data

The BC Coroner's service sends IH a weekly report of preliminary data (from the previous week) on *suspected* overdose deaths.

BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) sends a daily report of paramedic attended 911 calls for poisonings/ingestion.

Note: Toxic drug data is not received in real-time, which can result in communication delays. Additionally, the data shared with IH does not specify if individuals impacted are Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

Drug Checking

IH receives updates from drug checking technicians regarding unusual findings, increased concentrations of a substance, or other notable information that could increase the risk of overdose.

Note: Drug checking instruments are not available in all communities. IH, FNHA and MNBC continue to support the expansion of drug checking services into more areas in the Interior.

Community Input

Community members are often the first to know about overdoses (both non-fatal and fatal).

IH, FNHA and MNBC appreciate updates from communities on overdose and toxic drug activity they are seeing locally.

See below for details on how to connect with IH, FNHA, and MNBC.

WHEN to Connect with IH, FNHA, and/or MNBC

When an unusual amount of overdoses (toxic drug poisonings) has occurred within a community, health authorities may issue an overdose alert. These alerts are initiated from information provided to Regional Harm Reduction Coordinators by staff in acute and community settings, community service providers, drug checkers, RCMP, BCEHS, BC Coroners, First Nations communities, Métis Chartered Communities, and clients.



Artist: Al-Lisa McKay, Sugar Cane Band <https://www.misswhitespider.ca/>

There is no established threshold of drug poisonings for each community and/or department that initiates an alert. Factors considered when determining whether or not to issue an alert:

- Has there been more than one drug poisoning/overdose in a short period of time, and is that unusual for your community?
- Has there been multiple drug poisonings/overdoses over a longer period, and is that unusual for your community?
- Have there been multiple drug poisoning/overdose deaths?



Community leadership or health staff can reach out for consultation issuing an overdose alert, and/or co-developing a community response plan if an urgent or unusual situation emerges related to overdoses and/or the toxic drug supply.

HOW to Connect with IH, FNHA, and/or MNBC

Community leaders or health service staff can reach out for:

- **Support issuing an Overdose or Drug Alert:**
 - *During business hours:* IH Regional Harm Reduction Coordinator harmreduction.coordinator@interiorhealth.ca
 - *After hours/weekends:* IH On-Call Medical Health Officer, 1-866-457-5648
Note: After hour Medical Health Officer support can include:
 - Advising on unusual trends in overdose activity the week prior
 - Support deciding whether to issue a community overdose alert
 - Communicating with local IH clinical operations teams (Emergency Department, Mental Health & Substance Use, etc.) to ensure their awareness
 - Help brainstorming actions to mitigate risk
- **Support obtaining fentanyl test strips, naloxone kits and harm reduction supplies or education regarding use and distribution of supplies:**
 - IH Regional Harm Reduction Coordinator harmreduction.coordinator@interiorhealth.ca
 - FNHA Harm Reduction Coordinator harmreduction@fnha.ca
 - MNBC's Harm Reduction Coordinator harmreduction@mnbca.ca
- **Consultation about community concerns or to request specific information on the toxic drug crisis, or to discuss a collaborative response:**
 - Indigenous mental wellness team Indigenousmentalwellness@interiorhealth.ca
 - MNBC's Harm Reduction Coordinator harmreduction@mnbca.ca
 - FNHA Interior Region Mental Health & Wellness Team at IRSupports@fnha.ca or 1-833-751-2525
- **To receive Drug and Overdose Alerts via text:**
 - Text the word JOIN to 253787 (ALERTS), message and data rates may apply.

WHAT Information to Gather

Determining if an increase in toxic drug poisonings should become an Alert is dependent on multiple sources of data and is cross-referenced with past data. Initial information is investigated further and then a decision is made on whether to issue an alert. Gathering as much information as possible helps to inform the decision of whether to issue a toxic drug poisoning alert.

Important information to gather and report:

- The number of toxic drug poisonings (fatal or non-fatal)
- Period of time the overdoses occurred within (hours, days, weeks)
- Unusual toxic drug poisoning presentation/symptoms (i.e. severe vomiting, prolonged sedation, psychosis, client reports usual feelings upon substance use, etc.)
- Any additional information provided by patient
- The community or communities that the toxic drug poisonings are occurring in
- Site/agency you are emailing or calling from
- If the concerns were brought to you by another service provider include their contact information for follow up.

For feedback on this document, please contact: indigenousmentalwellness@interiorhealth.ca