The Opioid Overdose Emergency

The Situation:

Who is at Risk?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Of people who died of overdose in 2016...</th>
<th>Of people who were brought to the emergency department for an overdose in 2016...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of people who were brought to the emergency department for an overdose in 2016...</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/5 were male</td>
<td>2/5 were using drugs alone</td>
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<td>In 17/20 cases, 911 was not called</td>
<td>More than 1/2 were using drugs in a private residence</td>
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<td>4/5 were between age 20-49</td>
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Overdoses and Overdose Deaths are Increasing Because of Fentanyl

- People don’t know what or how much is in their drugs
- Many people who test positive for fentanyl don’t know that they are taking it
- Since fentanyl was introduced, more people have been having repeat overdoses

Fentanyl was found in 3/5 of overdose deaths in 2016

At InSite, 4/5 of drugs tested had fentanyl

There are different types of fentanyl, such as furanyl fentanyl and carfentanil, which vary in toxicity

Fentanyl has been found in:
- Pills, as fake oxys or other club drugs
- Powder, as heroin or fent
- Powder mixed into other drugs (crystal meth, cocaine, etc.)

A Public Health Emergency was declared on April 14, 2016

This lets the province collect more information on overdoses so that they know where most help is needed
Since the emergency was declared...

**Naloxone has been made more available**
Naloxone (also known as Narcan) reverses the effects of overdosing on opioids (e.g., heroin, methadone, fentanyl, morphine)

More people have been trained to give naloxone, including paramedics, firefighters, and police
People don’t need a prescription for naloxone anymore
Now anyone can give naloxone to someone who has overdosed

The Take Home Naloxone program has been expanded

- The Take Home Naloxone program provides training and gives out naloxone kits for free to people who are either at risk of having an overdose or seeing someone having an overdose

- Over 45,000 kits have been given out, over half of which were given out in the past year

- Over 9,000 kits have been used to reverse an overdose

- There are over 500 Take Home Naloxone sites in BC, including at emergency departments, correctional centres, health units, and community agencies

- The Facility Overdose Response Box program was introduced
- The Facility Overdose Response Box program gives out boxes with naloxone in them to community organizations, so that they can respond if clients overdose

The Joint Task Force on Overdose Response was formed

- The Joint Task Force works with the government and provides leadership in responding to the crisis

A provincial overdose awareness campaign was started

- The campaign, using posters and TV ads, tells people how to prevent, recognize, and respond to overdoses

The BC Coroners Service has formed a specialized drug investigation team

- This team hopes to complete investigations of overdose deaths sooner

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act was made a law

- People who call 911 to help someone who has overdosed will not be charged with simple possession, and neither will the person who overdosed

More people are on opioid substitution therapy

- The number of people on Suboxone has nearly doubled since 2015, and more people are on methadone

- PharmaCare now covers methadone and Suboxone for people who need it, if a form filled out by a physician is approved

- It’s now easier for doctors to prescribe Suboxone, and nurse practitioners are allowed to refill prescriptions

Overdose prevention sites were opened across BC

- Overdose Prevention Sites are temporary spaces for people who use drugs, monitored in case of an overdose

- There are 23 Overdose Prevention Sites across BC

- There have been:
  - Over 85,000 visits
  - Over 600 overdoses managed
  - 0 deaths at any Overdose Prevention Site

Supervised consumption services are increasing

- InSite, a supervised consumption site in Vancouver, is now open 24 hours a day during peak times

- Applications for supervised consumption sites have been made for Kelowna, Kamloops, Victoria, and another in Vancouver

- 2 supervised consumption sites in Surrey and 1 more in Vancouver have been approved

Created by the BCCDC Harm Reduction Team
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