

Date:	May 8, 2020
To:	Chief Operating Officers, Health Services Administrators, Directors of Specialized Services, Community Services Managers, Team Leads, Interprofessional Teams, Emergency Room Departments, Public Health Program Leads, Public Health Resource Nurses
From:	Dr. Raina Fumerton, Acting Chief Medical Health Officer Michelle Lawrence, Executive Lead, Mental Health and Substance Use
Re:	Provincial Overdose Alert

In the context of dual public health emergencies, there has been an increase in overdose events and overdose deaths within Northern Health and across the province. BCCDC has released a provincial overdose alert for all health regions, warning of the increasing toxicity level of illicit drugs including both down and stimulants.

In addition to the unpredictability of the illicit market, this crisis is further compounded by the increased level of isolation experienced by people who use drugs in the context of COVID-19. This includes the closing of several community supports for this population and disruption of regular supply channels leading to increased risk withdrawal.

NH tips to stay safe:

- Broadly distribute and post this alert within NH and local harm reduction locations
- Continue to provide vital harm reduction services in alignment with [Supporting Harm Reduction in the context of COVID](#)
- Connect with local peer groups to raise awareness and further support peer distribution of harm reduction supplies and naloxone
- Encourage clients to use substances in the presence of others, go slow and get trained on how to use naloxone
- To find a naloxone distribution site in your community click [here](#)
- To locate overdose preventions sites across the province click [here](#)
- Support clients to seek prescriptions from their local primary care provider to reduce their risk of overdose. Contact 1-844-645-7811 if you do not have a Provider

Any questions please contact:

Dr. Rakel Kling, Medical Health Officer, Northern Interior – rakel.kling@northernhealth.ca
Reanne Sanford, Regional Nursing Lead, Harm Reduction – reanne.sanford@northernhealth.ca

Thank you,
Dr. Raina Fumerton, MPH FRCPC
Acting Chief Medical Health Officer
and Medical Health Officer, Northwest HSDA