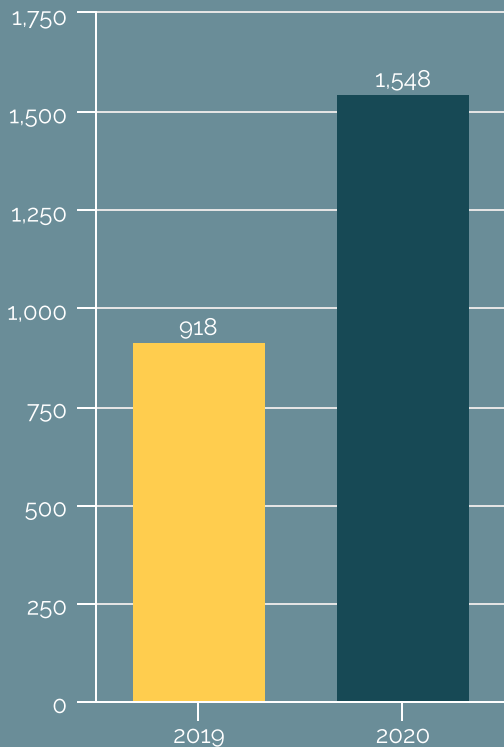


# Communicating Drug Alerts: Exploring Perceptions of People Who Use Drugs and Service Providers

Project Overview



## Overdose Deaths



## Background

Drug alerts inform people who use drugs when novel contaminants are identified and causing unexpected overdose response in a particular region in British Columbia (BC).

Since 2014, street drugs have become more toxic due to adulteration with fentanyl, leading to frequent alerting across BC (e.g., through posters, text alerts, etc.). The COVID-19 pandemic has made this worse as services for people who use drugs are less available, and the drug supply is more toxic and unpredictable.

## Objective

This project aims to better understand where, how, and if people who use drugs receive information about toxic drugs. We will explore preferences and suggestions to improve alert messaging, frequency, and ways of communicating alerts.

## Data Collection



The Harm Reduction Client Survey is an annual survey assessing substance use trends, and access to harm reduction supplies and services across BC. Questions were added to assess clients' knowledge of drug alerts.



Approximately 30, one-on-one interviews will be conducted with people who use drugs, from across BC. We are particularly interested in speaking with people who identify as youth (age 16 to 24); GLBTQ2S+; South Asian; and people working in the trades.



A focus group will be held with 4 to 5 harm reduction service providers from across BC.

## Analysis

Descriptive analysis of the Harm Reduction Client Survey will be conducted to assess knowledge and opinions about drug alerts. Additionally, thematic analysis of the interviews and focus group will be employed to better understand how people who use drugs receive information regarding toxic drugs; the preferred ways of communicating drug alerts; and how current alerts can be improved.

The findings from the study will be used to update existing guidelines on communicating drug alerts, and to inform harm reduction policies.

For further information, contact:  
Jackson Loyal, [jackson.loyal@bccdc.ca](mailto:jackson.loyal@bccdc.ca)

And visit:  
<https://www.towardtheheart.com>



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Use  
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.

Centre canadien sur  
les dépendances et  
l'usage de substance

Données. Engagement. Résultat



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Provincial Health Services Authority

toward  
THE heart.com