Vancouver
Vancouver Fire Rescue Services
Opioid Crisis Background

Crisis Overview

April 2016
BC declares crisis a public health emergency

November and December 2016
150% increase in overdose deaths in Vancouver

Spring 2017
Overdose deaths remain at unprecedented levels

Dec 2017
After a slight decline, overdose deaths increase across Vancouver

City Actions

December 2016
City institutes 0.5% property tax to mitigate crisis impacts

February to July 2017
City invests $3.5M for first responders and community

Spring 2018
Co-chair Community Action Team and work with Urban Health Leaders Action Council

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Crisis Continues

B.C. review draws link between corrections system and some overdose deaths

Vancouver mayor calls for drug decriminalization after record year for opioid deaths

A Vancouver cop tells Philadelphia why he changed his mind on safe injection sites

B.C. allows nurses to prescribe opioid substitutes, lowering barriers to treatment and clean alternative to street drugs

'Urgent, disruptive measures' needed to stop opioid-related deaths: Vancouver's mayor

Canada breaks record for annual opioid-related deaths as crisis worsens

Vancouver city council told fentanyl meant 2017 saw record number of drug-overdose deaths

Drug testing machine to be piloted in Vancouver as overdose crisis continues

The answer to Canada's opioid overdose decriminalization, say Vancouver drug users and advocates
A picture is worth....

May 2, 2017, 12:31
Monthly VFRS Overdose Calls: 1 Jan 2014 - 31 Mar 2018

Data Source: Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services
Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services

Vancouver Fire and Rescue Service Overdose Calls Attended in 2017
City total: 6,234
Community health service areas mapped by natural breaks:
- 195 to 313 calls in area
- 8 to 46 calls in area
- 66 to 132 calls in area
- Downtown: 661 calls
- DTES: 3,567 calls

Data Source: Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services
Data Source: BC Coroners Service and Vancouver Police Department
Naloxone Administered by VF&RS

2016:
141 administrations

2017:
215 administrations
Overdose Deaths in BC and Vancouver

Annual Overdose Deaths in British Columbia and Vancouver: 1 Jan 2007 – 31 December 2017

Data Source: BC Coroners Service
Estimated Ratio of Overdose Deaths to Calls, Jan 1-Dec 31

Total number of VPD overdose-suspected deaths to total number of VFRS overdose calls.
Map shown by local health area. City overall ratio: 1:22
VFRS calls from UBC are excluded.
Toxicology reports are not yet complete on police-attended sudden death cases, and final overdose death numbers need to be confirmed by the BC Coroners Service.

Data Source: Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services.
Summary of City Investments

$3.5M to address the Opioid Crisis

Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services
- Additional DTES Medic Unit
- Health and wellness supports
$2.05M

Community Safety
- New Strathcona CPC
- Sustained budget increase for CPCs
$430K

Community Overdose Grants
- 23 high impact projects
- $600K towards peer employment, capacity building
- Leveraged: Over $1.07m
$1.02M
Challenges

• Mental health impacts; compassion fatigue; addiction
• Exposure risk; basic EMS PPE is effective
• Drug identification; VFRS, VPD, & users
• Mass Casualty Incidents; parties, bad batches
• Scene safety; “do-gooders”, sharps
• Resource allocation; 10% of call volume
• Extreme localized call volumes; Fire Hall 2 did 1500 calls in one month
• Related fire risk
Key Initiatives-VFRS

• Naloxone administration by Operations and Fire Prevention staff
• Airway management mastery
• Linking patients to community services
• Supporting safe injection sites, encampment safety, temporary facilities
• One year tour of duties in busiest hall
• Other halls cover routine calls in busy areas
• Real-time predictive modelling and surveillance (thanks Surrey Fire)
• Hazmat teams equipped with Smith Detection Ion Scanner 600’s
• Upstaffing medic units in busy areas to 3 or 4 firefighters from 2
• Soon upstaffing some heavy apparatus to 5 from 4; crisis is also direct driver of fire risk (5 fire deaths already in 2018)
Key Initiatives - VFRS Mental Health

- Full-time mental health coordinator (Captain)
- Trauma care (20 sessions with trauma clinician covered)
- Resilient Minds training for all staff
- Enhanced EAP program
- Well developed peer support
- Multi-faith Chaplaincy
- Wounded Warrior & other retreats
- Implementing orientation sessions for incoming Fire Hall 2 crews
- Trauma therapy golden retriever
Key Initiatives – City Wide

- Innovation in Data Monitoring
- Investments in Drug Checking Technology
- Supporting De-Stigmatization Programs
- Supporting Overdose Prevention Sites
- Scaling up access to treatment
City-Wide Response
Next Steps in 2018

**Monitor Impacts**

*Continue to monitor impacts:* Ensure that the City has regular updates on the impacts of the crisis on residents and coordinate across City departments.

**Address Stigma**

*Work together with people with lived experience to find solutions:* Implement innovative face-to-face conversations on what works, and support low-barrier, peer employment.

**Work Together**

*Work with local community, Provincial and National Partners:* Vancouver’s Community Action Team, Federation of Canadian Municipalities,
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Thank You