



June 5, 2017

Ref: 194282

Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner
British Columbia Coroners Service
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Email: ChiefCoronerCorrespondence@gov.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

Thank you for your correspondence dated May 7, 2017, regarding recommendations contained in the Verdict at Inquest concerning the death of Brandon Juhani Jansen, which occurred in Powell River, British Columbia on March 7, 2016.

My staff and I were incredibly saddened to hear of this loss of life. I can assure you the Ministry of Education is committed to supporting schools in educating young people about substance use prevention. It is important to note, the Ministry of Education is a member of the Province's Task Force on Overdose Response and since the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) declared a public health emergency with respect to opioid-related overdose deaths, has taken a number of steps to support prevention and awareness efforts in school communities. These actions include:

- Provided substance use education and awareness for all safe school coordinators (October 2016).
- Communication with boards of education and independent school authorities supporting the PHO recommendations regarding the purchase of naloxone kits in schools that have high-risk populations or drug use challenges (November 2016).
- Electronic-distribution of teacher resources on substance use education, including opioid overdose, to safe school coordinators and K–12 partners. (December 2016/January 2017).
- Province-wide teleconference with superintendents to raise awareness of the opioid overdose issue, and ensure they have received the resources developed to-date for educators and parents (December 2016).
- Provincial meeting of safe school coordinators, including a special session on opioid overdose prevention and intervention with the PHO (January 2017).

We have reviewed the two recommendations specifically directed at the K–12 education sector, and would like to provide you with an overview of measures we have already taken that address the recommendations, as well as future plans.

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Recommendation 1: Conduct a review of approved drug education resources in line with current evidence based research. Implement into the education curriculum a substance abuse and addiction program, starting at the elementary level by giving teachers the resources and tools needed.

The new K–9 Physical and Health education encompasses health and safety topics, including substance use. The new Physical and Health Education (PHE) curriculum focuses on the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs related to health literacy and encompasses a number of important health and safety topics, including nutrition, prevention of illness and injury, decision-making skills, healthy relationship skills, mental well-being, sexual health, and substance use. The topic of substance use is addressed at every grade level within this curriculum, starting in Kindergarten.

There are a number of newly developed substance use prevention tools and resources available to the K–12 education sector. These include opioid-related teaching resources recently developed by the Centre for Addictions Research BC (CARBC) and funded by the Ministry of Health. Ministry of Education staff promoted these resources to education partners in January 2017 through the safe school coordinators network and the K–12 education partner groups.

With respect to conducting a review of drug education resources and programs, the CARBC conducted an extensive review of evidence-informed resources in 2008, which led to the development of Joint Consortium for School Health Substance Use toolkits intended for education communities (<http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/index.php/resources/tools-toolkits>). The Centre for Addictions Research BC also used this review to develop teaching resources and supports for schools in the area of substance use and addictions including:

- Helping Schools Program (Grades 4 to 12) – supports teachers, school administrators, district staff, trustees, parents and others to implement a comprehensive school health approach to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs that promote student health and learning.
- *iMinds* Learning Resources (Grades 4 to 12) – drug-related health literacy resource with online modules and lessons that support the development of core competencies in the new Physical and Health Education (PHE) curriculum.

The Vernon School District is currently piloting and evaluating the Preventure program, a school-based intervention aimed at reducing adolescent drug and alcohol use in high-risk teenagers. We look forward to the results of this pilot.

Recommendation 2: Have naloxone kits available in the school system with trained personnel on site.

As the senior public health official of BC, the PHO has advised prevention strategies are most effective for youth aged 10-18, as it relates to the issue of opioid overdoses. This includes increasing awareness of safer drug practices. The PHO has also advised, schools are not designated high-risk environments and no overdoses have occurred at a BC school. In addition, the PHO has recommended schools consider purchasing a naloxone kit where there is a high-risk population or students are using drugs on or near school grounds.

The Province's Task Force on Overdose Response has developed a Naloxone Risk Assessment Tool for government and non-government organizations, including schools. The risk assessment tool is intended to assist organizations in their decision making around whether to stock naloxone for use in the event of an overdose, what formulation of naloxone to obtain (intramuscular versus intranasal), and how to access training on the administration of naloxone.

The risk assessment tool was recently finalized and Ministry of Education staff will be sharing this tool with the K–12 education sector in the coming weeks. Ministry staff are currently working with the Product Distribution Centre, through the Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services, to develop a streamlined process for districts/schools who would like to purchase kits.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Inquest's recommendations and to reiterate the Ministry's commitment to work with education partners and government colleagues to address substance use prevention and intervention in BC schools. We are committed to making this work a priority, and working with our partners to provide information and resources to students, families, and teachers.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Scott Beddall, Director of Student Safety and Wellness, by phone at (250) 514-4961 or by email at scott.beddall@gov.bc.ca.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Dave Byng
Deputy Minister