



STATEMENT

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
BC Coroners Service

Chief coroner's statement on anniversary of public health emergency

VICTORIA – Lisa Lapointe, chief coroner, has released the following statement in recognition of the sixth anniversary of the public health emergency into substance-related harms:

“Today, we acknowledge and remember the many beloved members of our communities who have been lost to this crisis. Since 2016, the rate of death caused by the toxic drug supply has more than doubled, and in the northern part of our province, the rate has more than tripled. All of those lost were people who contributed to our province in ways big and small, and who were loved by family and friends.

“On this day of tremendous sadness, we know that more must be done and that a better future is possible. The deaths of more than 9,400 people over the past six years is a clear indication that new and innovative programs and options for people who use drugs are urgently needed, and that a health and wellness approach must replace the harmful, stigmatizing practices of the past.

“Much greater access to safer supply across the province is critical to preventing future loss of life. This, alongside decriminalization of possession for personal use, greater access to evidence-based treatment and care, and a continuum of services that meets people where they are, will support those at risk and provide a path out of this crisis.”

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