



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
BC Coroners Service

BC Coroners Service shares 2024 data into unregulated drug toxicity deaths

VICTORIA – Reporting from the BC Coroners Service shows the continued impact of unregulated drug toxicity in communities throughout the province in 2024, with 2,253 lives lost last year.

The cumulative number of unregulated drug deaths represents a 13% decrease from the number of deaths in 2023 and is less than the annual figure from any of the previous three years. The rate of death in 2024 was 40 per 100,000 people, compared with 47 per 100,000 in 2023, 45 per 100,000 in 2022 and 44 per 100,000 in 2021.

“The information collected by our coroners during their investigations into unregulated drug toxicity deaths, indicates a decline in fatalities over the last several months of 2024. This is consistent with reporting from other jurisdictions in Canada and internationally,” said Dr. Jatinder Baidwan, chief coroner. “This doesn’t mitigate the fact that 2,253 members of our communities died in 2024, leaving behind grieving loved ones, friends, colleagues and teammates. Our thoughts are with all of those many, many people who have been touched by this crisis.”

In 2024, about seven in every 10 decedents were between the ages of 30 and 59, and nearly three-quarters were male. The rate of death among females in 2024 is 20 per 100,000. This is an increase of 65% from 2020 (13 per 100,000) and a slight reduction from 2023 (21 per 100,000).

As in years prior, the drug-toxicity crisis affected cities of all sizes in 2024. By Local Health Area, the highest rates of death per 100,000 were in Vancouver-Centre North (422), Lillooet (116), Greater Campbell River (109), Terrace (109) and Prince George (103).

Fentanyl and its analogues continue to be the primary driver of unregulated drug toxicity deaths in B.C., detected in 78% of expedited toxicological testing in 2024. Cocaine (52%), fluorofentanyl (46%), methamphetamine (43%) and bromazolam (41%) were the other most common substances detected in expedited toxicology. It’s important to note that the data from the report is preliminary and subject to change as additional toxicology results are received and investigations are concluded.

Since the public health emergency was first declared in April 2016, the lives of at least 16,047 people in B.C. have been lost to unregulated drug toxicity.

Learn More:

November and December 2024 unregulated drug toxicity deaths: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?>

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Youth Unregulated Drug Toxicity Deaths, 2019-2023: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/youth_unregulated_drug_toxicity_deaths_in_bc_2019-2023.pdf

BC Coroners Service Death Review Panel: An Urgent Response to a Continuing Crisis: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/death-review-panel/an_urgent_response_to_a_continuing_crisis_report.pdf

B.C. Ministry of Health mental-health and substance-use supports: <https://helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca/>

BC Centre on Substance Use: <https://www.bccsu.ca>

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