



May 1, 2024

Re: Summer festivals and the provision of harm reduction services

To whom it may concern:

As we enter the summer season, I would like to take the opportunity to remind festival organizers, promoters, local governments, health authorities, public safety officials, and the public about the importance of holding festivals and events safely in the context of a toxic unregulated drug supply.

In addition to medical and security services provided on festival grounds, it is important to support the use of readily available harm reduction services, including the carry and use of naloxone kits and the provision and support of drug checking services where illegal substance use is a known risk.

Naloxone kits continue to be widely available to the public through participating pharmacies and harm reduction sites throughout the province. Drug checking at festivals helps individuals make informed decisions about using substances and enables alerts to festival attendees and event medical staff when toxic and/or contaminated drugs have been identified at the event. This service is offered free to the public through community partners and organizations.

It continues to be good practice to offer handwashing stations during these events, to encourage those feeling unwell to stay home, and to create a space for those who start to feel unwell to be separated from others.

I strongly encourage organizers to work with their local health authority, municipal government, and community partner agencies to ensure that harm reduction services are made available to patrons to reduce the risk of toxic drug poisoning. Providing these services at festivals is also supported by the BC Coroners Service, and is explicitly recommended in the 2022 [Death Review Panel report](#). The Ministry of Health guidelines for [Major Planned Events](#) offer further information on providing harm reduction services.

Thank you for taking steps to help everyone stay safe this summer.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Henry
MD, MPH, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer