
STATEMENT

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Ministry of Health

Minister's statement on lives lost to poisoned drugs in October

VICTORIA – Josie Osborne, Minister of Health, has released the following statement regarding the BC Coroners Service report on illicit drug toxicity deaths in October 2024:

“Today’s report from the BC Coroners Service is a reminder of the ongoing devastation caused by the toxic-drug crisis and my heart goes out to the family, friends and colleagues of the 155 people we lost in October. Each of these people mattered deeply and their absence is felt by everyone who knew and loved them.

“The toxic-drug supply remains one of the most serious threats to public health, affecting people from all walks of life. While we have seen encouraging progress, with the lowest number of deaths in four years, there is still much work ahead.

“Mental-health care is health care and we are committed to making it accessible for everyone. We are building a system that provides life-saving tools, such as take-home naloxone and drug-checking services that can help people take their first steps toward recovery when they are ready. At the same time, we are taking action to expand treatment, recovery and crisis supports so everyone can receive timely, compassionate care without stigma or barriers.

“I also want to recognize the tireless efforts of those on the front lines — health-care professionals, community organizations, first responders, peer support workers and many others. Their dedication is at the heart of our response and their empathy in action keeps our communities safer every day.

“We cannot become indifferent to this crisis. Together, we must take bold, compassionate action to ensure that everyone has access to the care they need to survive and move toward recovery.”

Learn More:

For more information about mental-health and substance-use supports in B.C., visit:
<https://helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca/>

To learn how B.C. is building better mental-health and addiction care, visit:
<https://gov.bc.ca/BetterCare>

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