

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2021MMHA0055-001962  
Oct. 13, 2021

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

### **Funding strengthens B.C.'s system of substance-use treatment, recovery care**

VANCOUVER – A new investment in B.C.'s system of substance-use care will build up treatment and recovery services for people who need them in communities throughout the province.

This \$132-million investment over the next three years for treatment and recovery services is part of Budget 2021's historic half-billion-dollar investment to continue building a comprehensive system of mental health and addictions care from the ground up.

“When a person living with addiction is ready to take a step toward recovery, we must ensure services are available when and where they need them,” said Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. “We have been busy patching holes where urgently needed over the past four years. Now, through Budget 2021's historic investment, we are beginning to make true systemic change. B.C.'s \$132-million investment in treatment and recovery will result in significant improvements everywhere in the province, making substance-use care more seamless, better integrated and easier to access.”

This funding will increase services across all regions of the province to strengthen the full continuum of substance-use treatment and recovery services, including withdrawal management, transition and assessment, treatment and aftercare services.

To achieve this, the investment will create more than 65 new or enhanced services throughout B.C., add more than 130 full-time-equivalent staff and open approximately 195 new substance-use treatment beds. Precise numbers will be confirmed through request-for-proposals processes. Updates will be provided along the way.

The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions is working with health authorities on implementation planning for the full suite of enhancements over the next three years. Below is a snapshot of initiatives throughout B.C., with more services to be announced in every region:

#### Withdrawal management:

- new sobering and assessment centre in Prince George
- new addiction medicine consult team at Burnaby Hospital
- new outpatient withdrawal management services in multiple locations throughout the Interior
- additional funding for withdrawal beds at Vancouver Detox

#### Transition and assessment:

- new transitional/stabilization beds across Interior Health, ensuring that people receive care planning and connection to treatment after leaving withdrawal management

facilities

- enhancing substance-use assessment and/or transition services at Richmond Hospital, Onsite Detox and at St. Paul's Hospital to ensure people are more easily connected to services and experience more co-ordinated and seamless transitions

Treatment:

- new regional residential treatment beds to support women from the Interior and Island health regions
- expanded adult addictions day treatment services in various communities in the Northern Health region
- extension of the Indigenous-led (Gwa'sala-'nakwaxda'xw) partnership program for alcohol treatment and recovery in Port Hardy

Aftercare:

- new recovery wellness community centres in two locations in the Vancouver Coastal Health region, to help people on their ongoing recovery journey
- new vocational and occupational therapists for Fraser Health's Adult Day, Evening and Weekend (DEW) program will support people in reaching their substance-use recovery goals through group and one-on-one employment-focused services
- new peer-support initiatives to support ongoing aftercare in locations throughout the Northern Health region
- new peer-led, trauma-informed education program for people with lived and living experience of addiction in the Vancouver Coastal Health Region

These improvements to the treatment and recovery system of care build on recent expansions, including more than 100 new treatment and recovery beds for adults, 123 new youth beds and 20 new youth beds at the Traverse treatment centre in Chilliwack.

Enhancing B.C.'s response to the overdose emergency is an integral part of A Pathway to Hope, B.C.'s roadmap for building the comprehensive system of mental health and addictions care British Columbians deserve.

**Learn More:**

A Pathway to Hope: [https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BCMentalHealthRoadmap\\_2019.pdf](https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BCMentalHealthRoadmap_2019.pdf)

A Pathway to Hope progress report:

[https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/mental-health-addictions/pathway\\_to\\_hope\\_update\\_report\\_final.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/mental-health-addictions/pathway_to_hope_update_report_final.pdf)

A backgrounder follows.

For a Chinese translation: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/25521#translations>

**Contact:**

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions  
Communications  
778 584-3474

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](https://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)

---

## BACKGROUND

For Immediate Release  
2021MMHA0055-001962  
Oct. 13, 2021

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

### **What people are saying**

#### **Dr. Patricia Daly, chief medical health officer, Vancouver Coastal Health –**

“This investment will enable us to both broaden and strengthen the continuum of care for people accessing treatment for substance-use disorder in our region. Irrespective of where an individual is on their journey to recovery, our services will be further equipped to deliver compassionate and respectful care. As the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the harms associated with the poisoned drug supply, it is a pivotal time to take additional actions to address barriers to accessible quality care.”

#### **Fiona Dalton, president and CEO, Providence Health Care –**

“St. Paul’s Hospital cares for some of the most high-risk patient populations in the region. In recent years, the provincial government has made important investments at the hospital to address the needs of those needing mental wellness and substance use supports, such as investments into our Mental Health HUB and the Rapid Access Addictions Clinic, but challenges remain in providing peer supports to patients and transitioning them to community settings that best address their needs. This major investment will improve and save lives of patients in our hospitals, the Lower Mainland and the whole province.”

#### **Mark Haggerty, peer navigator, St. Paul’s Hospital’s Rapid Access Addiction Clinic –**

“Only someone with lived experience can understand addiction. People are apprehensive for many reasons when they come to the hospital, so seeing someone who looks like you, or understands you, or has been where you’ve been immediately puts them at ease.”

#### **Susan Brown, president and CEO, Interior Health –**

“Everyone impacted by mental health and addictions has a unique experience, requiring supports that are flexible and personalized to their wellness journey. Having the ability to meet individual needs is important when setting treatment goals. This investment will go a long way toward creating new options and strengthening the continuum of care throughout the Interior Health region.”

#### **Jacqueline Roth, a person with lived experience working as a life skills worker for Interior Health who is completing her bachelor’s degree in addiction counselling –**

“This is a wonderful opportunity to help people. Not all drug use is problematic and not everyone needs inpatient treatment. Recovery looks different for everyone. We need flexible options, including more counselling and safe supply. We need improved access, better followup care and help with transitions. When I was trying to get into treatment, I had a home with

access to a phone and the internet and a supportive family, but still faced barriers like wait times, expenses and travel. I had to call a facility every day over a two-week period to try to get a spot. I hope today's announcement will mean improved access to a wide range of supports so people in addiction find it much easier to get the help they are seeking."

**Kathy MacNeil, president and CEO, Island Health –**

"We know it takes a continuum of care to support people in reaching their recovery goals. Investments like this support teams in creating new services and enhancing existing ones to better meet our client's needs."

**Dr. Victoria Lee, president and CEO, Fraser Health –**

"Unfortunately, the overdose public health emergency continues to take a significant toll across our region. These diverse treatment and recovery services will provide tailored supports throughout the continuum of people's care journeys."

**Cathy Ulrich, CEO, Northern Health –**

"This funding will strengthen the continuity of care and reduce gaps for those in need. We appreciate the collaborative approach being taken to better respond to people experiencing mental-health or substance-use challenges, and look forward to working with all our partners to create timely connections to appropriate services."

**Contact:**

Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions  
Communications  
778 584-3474

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](https://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)