

---

## STATEMENTS

For Immediate Release  
2025HLTH0030-000319  
April 14, 2025

Ministry of Health

### **Minister's, provincial health officer's statements on the toxic-drug public health emergency anniversary**

VICTORIA – Josie Osborne, Minister of Health, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, have issued the following statements marking the ninth anniversary of the toxic-drug crisis being declared a public health emergency:

#### **Josie Osborne, Minister of Health, said:**

“Today marks nine years since B.C. declared the toxic-drug crisis a public health emergency. Since that time, we have lost thousands of people to poisoned drugs, each one a valued member of their community. Each and every loss leaves lasting grief for the people who knew and loved them.

“This crisis continues to have a devastating impact throughout our province, from families and communities to the front-line workers who provide care, support and compassion in the face of unimaginable loss.

“Substance use is shaped by many complex factors, including trauma, mental- and physical-health challenges, poverty, stigma and barriers to stable housing and support. Ending this crisis requires an equally complex and compassionate response, one that prioritizes care over judgment.

“We know there is still so much more to do. On this solemn anniversary, we renew our commitment to saving lives, supporting healing and working together to turn the tide on this crisis. By reducing stigma, improving access to care and meeting people where they're at, we can help more people find their path to recovery and build a future filled with hope.”

#### **Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, said:**

“This sombre anniversary reminds us of the ongoing tragic impact of the toxic-drug crisis that is being felt by families and communities across B.C. While we have seen some glimmers of hope in this past year with a decline in deaths, there remains much to do to ensure there are supports when needed at every point in a person's journey.

“Whether it is being able to have a conversation with a trusted loved one, peer or medical worker, access to life-saving naloxone, or a safe place to have drugs tested, we have seen how these harm-reduction measures make a difference and save lives.

“But the increasing toxicity and unpredictability of the drugs on the street also remind us that we must continue to have the courage to be innovative and unwavering in our approach to this public health crisis. The very lives of our brothers, sisters, friends, neighbours and colleagues

depend on it.”

**Contact:**

Ministry of Health  
Media Relations  
250 952-1887

---

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