

BRIEFING NOTE: BOOST COLLABORATIVE

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Location: Vancouver Community

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SITUATION

In 2016, the British Columbia (BC) Provincial Medical Health Officer, Perry Kendall, declared a public health emergency in response to the dramatic increase in opioid-related overdose deaths. In 2016, there were 922 confirmed overdose deaths in BC, with 215 occurring in Vancouver. BC is the epicentre of the crisis within Canada, with Vancouver's downtown eastside reporting the highest overdose rates. To address the urgent need for intervention, a spectrum of services were launched in late 2016 and early 2017. Despite this, the number of opioid-related overdose deaths remains far above historical averages.

BACKGROUND

Opioid use disorder (OUD) can be characterized as a chronic relapsing illness which, though associated with elevated rates of morbidity and mortality, has the potential to be in sustained, long-term remission with appropriate treatment. OUD may involve the use of illicitly manufactured opioids such as heroin or street fentanyl, or pharmaceutical opioid medications obtained illicitly or used non-medically. While current Canadian estimates are lacking, OUD is estimated to affect approximately 2.1% of Americans.

ASSESSMENT

Care for people living with OUD is a complex process requiring collaboration among multiple care providers and services. This is complicated further as providers face numerous obstacles in delivering optimal OUD care due to a variety of social, economic, cultural and medical challenges. Healthcare providers require effective systems to improve access and adherence to OUD treatment among vulnerable individuals. Increasingly, the healthcare community is employing quality improvement (QI) frameworks to promote system change and address gaps in care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the next 18 months, approximately 20 teams from across VCH Vancouver Community region will follow Structured Learning Collaborative methodology to develop, implement, measure and share best-practices in oral opioid agonist therapy (oOAT) for people living with OUD. Teams will work in partnership to improve access to high quality oOAT care, strengthen capacity for QI in primary care, mental health and substance use care settings, engage participating teams in joint QI activities to better coordinate seamless OUD services, and enhance partnerships across OUD providers in Vancouver through a QI structured learning collaborative approach. The purpose of the BOOST Collaborative is to improve the quality, effectiveness, and reach of substance use and support services in the Vancouver community to improve outcomes for people living with OUD. Planning and consultation with subject matter experts began in April and the official Launch will be in September 2017.