

Island Health Performance Measures

Toxic Drug Deaths



Year to Date
Performance

48.2

Island Health
Target

Less than or equal to
19.7

Performance
Assessment



Red

Performance is significantly outside acceptable range; take action and monitor progress.

What do we measure and why?

On April 14, 2016, the Provincial Health Officer of BC declared an emergency due to the sustained increase in toxic drug deaths, driven in part by the increasing presence of potent opioid analogues such as fentanyl.

Toxic Drug Deaths reports the number of deaths classified by the Coroner's Office as accidental or undetermined (confirmed and under investigation) where cause of death indicates apparent overdose from unregulated drugs (including street drugs, medications not prescribed to the deceased, combinations of the two, and/or cases where the origin of drug is not known).

What is the target?

Island Health's target is 19.7 or fewer per 100,000.

Lower rates are better.

How are we doing?

As of January 2025, Island Health was not meeting the target. An average of 37 Island Health residents were reported to have died each month in 2024.

According to the BC Coroners Service, unregulated drug toxicity remains the leading cause of death in BC for people aged 10-59, surpassing homicides, suicides, accidents, and natural diseases combined.

What actions are we taking?

Island Health has taken a cross-continuum approach to substance use care that spans from harm reduction to treatment and recovery. Addiction Medicine & Substance Use continues lifesaving harm reduction initiatives like drug testing and naloxone distribution, as well as expanding virtual and bed-based addiction care options.