



A. Government Response: *What actions should government take to address the ongoing overdose and drug toxicity crisis?*

The Crisis Centre of BC recommends three actions that the Provincial Government can take to address the overdose and drug toxicity crisis.

1. Embed suicide prevention into the Province's response to the toxic overdose crisis as part of a Zero Suicide plan
2. Fund models that free up money for prevention and treatment by utilizing least coercive, least costly, and most effective crisis intervention strategies
3. Recognize crisis line volunteers as our next generation of emergency crisis responders and create career pathways to address staffing shortages

B. Improving Care: *How should government and institutions improve services, support, and resources in response to the ongoing overdose and drug toxicity crisis (this includes, but is not limited to, prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery)?*

The Provincial Government has the opportunity to create a province-wide crisis care continuum expands community resources to address the current toxic overdose crisis and transforms how we care for those with substance use and those at risk for suicide. The care continuum would provide alternate pathways to care for mental health and addiction through crisis lines, mobile crisis response teams, and crisis stabilization centres, reducing reliance on police, fire and ambulance response and providing coordinated, non-coercive, wrap-around intervention and care for people in crisis.

Overdose and suicidality are closely inter-related, but the new opioid response strategies have a blind spot in terms of assessing suicidality and ensuring suicide-safer safety planning. The Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC (Crisis Centre BC) is able to leverage our 50+ years of expertise to empower health care professionals to talk directly and openly to their clients about suicidal thoughts as part of a drug use safety plan.

To fund a coordinated crisis response system, that includes crisis lines, the Provincial Government should introduce a 9-1-1 levy for wireless phone services, with the division of

funding determined by a task force composed of crisis lines, 9-1-1, BC Ambulance, and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

C. Addressing Toxic Drug Supplies: *What should be done to address the harm done by the increasingly toxic and unpredictable illicit supply of drugs?*

The Fraser Health Authority Substance Use Team works closely with the Fraser Health Crisis Line. The Crisis Line is able to warm transfer callers who are ready to work on their addiction directly to the Substance Use Team, allowing people to access help on their first call.

The Crisis Lines are able to do outreach and follow-up calls. Protocols should be set up across the emergency response and health care systems to engage crisis lines in:

- Suicide risk assessment support to frontline and peer addictions workers
- Outreach calls to people at risk of overdose
- Follow-up calls post-overdose
- Follow-up calls at discharge from detox and recovery programs

Addressing a toxic and unpredictable illicit drug supply requires us to reach out assertively to ensure people know we are there for them and care about preserving their lives.