

Purpose

For our project, we have been working with ANKORS in carrying out an Interior Health, Quality Improvement Needs Assessment. The aim of this assessment is to identify and assess community readiness, strengths, and gaps around harm reduction and overdose prevention services in underserved rural communities within the Interior Health (IH) region.

Background

Since 2012, illicit drug deaths have been on a steady increase. In 2016, a public health emergency was declared and since then, there have been over 3000 fatal overdoses. This year alone, BC has already faced over 700 opioid-related overdose deaths. For this project, one of the main identified issues is that rural communities are not receiving the same amount of attention and support as larger urban centers have in relation to this public health emergency.



Outcomes

The ultimate goal of this project is to support rural communities and to improve services for people who use drugs. In turn, decreasing stigma and overdose rates as well as, improving health and wellness throughout the IH region.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our field guides Cheryl Dowden and Alex Sherstobitoff, our instructor, Shannon Shah, and multiple ANKORS staff for their support throughout our project

Methods and Materials

The developed needs assessment utilizes a strengths-based community engagement approach. To help gather the needed information, two online surveys were created that follows the mixed-method approach. The first survey will be distributed through email with the target audience being the health and social service providers that work with individuals who use illicit substances. The second survey is designed for illicit substance users and will be completed on a computer supplied by ANKORS at the pre-identified locations. An ANKORS worker will be present for any assistance that may be needed. The data collected will be stored in an online program for later evaluation.


