


Island Health Performance Measures

Toxic Drug Deaths



Year to Date Performance	52.6	Performance Assessment	 Red
Island Health Target	Less than or equal to 19.7	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 September 2024, Island Health was not meeting the target.

In 2024, 41 Island Health residents died due to toxic drug supply each month (on average). Deaths due to illicit drug toxicity have risen dramatically across the province since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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, community naloxone training, and ongoing work to support best practices in overdose prevention. Additional detox and recovery services are also in development.