



Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

AHOUSAHT
DITIDAHT
ʔIIHATIS / ČIINAXINT
HESQUIAHT
HUPACASATH

HUU-AY-AHT
KA:YU:K'T'H'/CHE:K:TLES7ET'H'
MOWACHAHT/MUCHALAHT
NUCHATLAHT
TLA-O-QUI-AHT

TOQUAHT
TSESHAHT
UCHUCKLESAHT
YUUŁ.UʔŁ.ʔATH

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Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Demands Urgent and Immediate Action to Respond to Toxic Drug Overdose Crisis

First and foremost, we would like to send our deepest condolences to all of those impacted by the loss of a loved one to the toxic drug overdose crisis. Our hearts are with you. We will not sit silent as this crisis continues to impact our loved ones and valuable members.

B.C declared a public health emergency in April 2016 and since then we have seen more than 8,800 people within B.C lose their life as a direct result of toxic drugs and overdose. What kind of emergent response is there to a health emergency when the numbers of death are increasing? As First Nations, we continue to be over-represented in deaths due to toxic drugs and overdose, yet we still do not have the resources required to heal and live a safe life.

In fact, the number of lives being lost due to the toxic drug supply is higher than it's ever been and more than covid related deaths. A total of 327 people died in the Island Health region last year, this is up from 271 deaths in 2020. In that same time (2021), the Port Alberni/Clayoquot local health area (LHA) saw 21 people lose their life to toxic drug overdose. This is the highest death rate of Island Health's 14 LHAs, with a rate of 62 deaths per 100,000 people.

The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council and the Nuu-chah-nulth Health Caucus recently met and are demanding B.C and Canada to act urgently and immediately, in consultation with First Nations, to deal with the deadly toxic drug overdose crisis. We saw B.C and Canada use extraordinary measures and provide critical resources and funds to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic that claimed the lives of many loved ones, we ask for the same urgent response to fight the toxic drug overdose crisis that has already taken the lives of far too many.

We need to see a pathway for our people who want help. There are not enough resources for our people who want and need help and that needs to change. We are calling on B.C, Canada, and FNHA to work together in advancing this critical work in ways that will save lives and to begin the work of creating a 7 day a week rapid access addiction clinic within Nuu-chah-nulth Hahoulthee (traditional territories) along with a fully certified detox centre that will work in a culturally safe and trauma informed way.

President Judith Sayers states: "We are in a state of emergency with the number of deaths from drug overdoses with Nuu-chah-nulth People. We say No more deaths-we must fix this problem now! We need resources-money, services, and counselling and so much more. We can't keep saying this is a

crisis, an emergency if we haven't taken drastic steps to prevent more deaths. The time to act is now- let's act together to save lives."

Vice President Mariah Charleson adds "We just saw two days ago B.C. announce a Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples action plan to improve the lives of First Nations and Indigenous peoples living within B.C, we call on B.C to prioritize the work in response to the toxic drug overdose crisis that continues to disproportionately impact First Nations peoples, communities, and Nations with a plan and strategy that includes capacity building, sustained funding and culturally appropriate resources."

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About Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council

The Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC) provides programs and services to over 10,000 registered members. The role of the NTC is to represent 14 First Nations in three regions stretching 300 kilometers of the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island from Brooks Peninsula in the north to Point-no-Point in the south. The NTC represents Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkint, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay- aht, Kyuquot/Checklesaht, Mowachaht /Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshaht, Uchucklesaht and Ucluelet First Nations and provides a variety of programs and services to them.

For more information, please visit www.nuuchahnulth.org.