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MESSAGE BOX

UPDATE ON OPIOID CRISIS IN BC

The opioid crisis is not going away – the ambulance service relies on the continual support from public and the government

There were [102](#) suspected drug overdose deaths in Feb 2017. This is a 72.9% increase over the number of death occurring in Feb 2016

In 2016, paramedics responded to 19,275 overdose calls alone. Every times an ambulance is called to a fentanyl overdose emergency wait times increase. The workload placed on paramedics is huge.

A report released on March 21st, 2017 by the City of Vancouver found that overdose deaths in Vancouver are likely to surpass February totals.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Over the past 10 years, the demand for more paramedics has increased but resources for them have not.

The B.C. government issued a report on Metro B.C. (Vancouver and Victoria) regarding paramedics and resources. Rural and remote locations in B.C. were left out.

Recruiting and retaining workers in rural locations is challenging due to lack of funding for permanent part-time workers.

The workload placed on paramedics is huge. It's not uncommon for paramedics to work 16 hours straight because of a staffing shortage.

These men and women are tackling a grueling cycle of being overworked and burnt out due to lack of funds for more resources.

THOUGHTS ON RECENT FUNDING

The Ministry of Health recently announced \$91.4 million in additional funding for emergency health services over the next three years.

While this is good news for our members, the opioid crisis is not going away and we need continual support from the government to support BC residents.

Citizens need to know that we are short resources, and the resources that we do have are not being successfully used. Citizens are the ones at risk.

If BC Ambulance Services state no difference in response times, our stance is: There is a grave disconnect between what BC Ambulance service is telling the public and what we know from our work on the ground in the field.

OUR CAMPAIGN AND 8:59

We need to support BC Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers who are on the front lines of the opioid crisis and most health emergencies.

Currently, the national average wait time goal for paramedics is 8:59. In the province of British Columbia, this goal is only being met 30% of the time.

Since the 70's, a consensus standard response time of 8 minutes and 59 seconds became recognized by Emergency Medical Service (EMS) as after this time the likelihood of a patient having a "shockable" rhythm to survive declined by 8%.

In 2016, BC Emergency Health Services released an Action Plan to establish 8:59 as a realistic response time target for greatest success during life-threatening calls.

The Ambulance Paramedics of BC have developed a series of advertisements that shine a light on the impact of communities when paramedic's resources are not met.

While these ads may be challenging to watch, these are the scenarios paramedics face day in and day out.

In order to properly service the residents of B.C., APBC need more support and resources.