

**Yukon
Coroner's
Service**

News Release

Chief Coroner provides update on fatalities due to toxic illicit drugs

August 14, 2024 – The Yukon Coroner's Service (YCS) has investigated six deaths since January 1, 2024, which are confirmed to be the result of toxic substances. All these deaths involved opioids with five also involving cocaine. Benzodiazepines were seen in one case this year.

In this same time frame for 2023, YCS confirmed 12 cases, 10 of which involved opioids and 11 involving cocaine. By the end of 2023, 23 deaths due to toxic substances were investigated, with 20 of them involving opioids.

While every death due to toxic drug supplies is heartbreaking, the Yukon Coroner's Service has seen less fatalities this year in comparison to the past four years of this crisis, providing a sense of hope that the situation in the Yukon is improving.

YCS is urging all Yukoners to remain aware of the substance use health emergency that continues to affect every part of our society. We need to remain supportive of one another and to keep in mind that these deaths are preventable.

If you are struggling, please reach out to someone you know or to the services listed below.

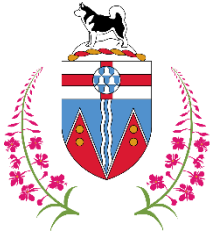
Quote:

This substance use crisis continues to be extremely difficult and it is affecting all of us in the Yukon. We must work together to help each other as we grieve these losses across our territory. I am urging all Yukoners to continue to show our compassion, kindness and support to anyone struggling with substance use.

The Yukon Coroner's Service sends our deepest condolences to all the families and communities who continue to be so severely impacted by these tragic deaths.

Chief Coroner Heather Jones

Contact: For media inquiries contact the chief coroner [email heather.jones@yukon.ca, or phone 867-667-5317; toll free 1-800-661-0408, extension 5317].



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RESOURCES

Please do not use alone - if you're by yourself and using, call the National Overdose Response Service (NORS) at 1-888-688-NORS (6677). We also encourage people to test any drugs before consumption using the drug checking services available from Blood Ties Four Directions, the Outreach Van, and at 405 Alexander. Make sure to communicate with a friend about what substances you are using, and ensure they know who to call for help in an emergency. Naloxone is a free, safe and effective way to reverse opioid overdose. Free kits are available throughout the territory – for more information on how to obtain a naloxone kit, please visit Yukon.ca. This is a simple measure that all citizens and business owners can take to prevent fatal overdoses and you can find it in many places in the Yukon. The Blood Ties Four Directions Supervised Consumption Site at 6189 6th Avenue is open daily from 10:30 AM to 9:30 PM.

The Department of Health and Social Services provides Opioid Treatment Services, including safer supply. Yukoners can call 867-668-2552 and self-refer for an appointment, which can often be scheduled the same day. Walk-ins for this service are also available. Opioid Treatment Services are provided at the Referred Care Clinic, Blood Ties Four Directions (Supervised Consumption Site), 405 Alexander, Housing First and Cornerstone.

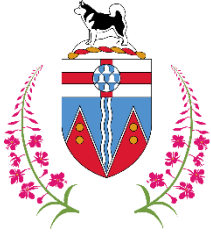
If you are struggling with substance use, there is help available. Mental Wellness and Substance Use Services (MWSUS) offers Rapid Access Counselling in person, virtually, or by phone from Monday to Friday. Secure an appointment within three business days by calling 867-456-3838 or toll-free at 1-866-456-3838. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) - Yukon Division provides Drop-in Counselling sessions, available in person, virtually, or over the phone from Monday to Saturday. Learn more at 867-668-6429. For immediate support, call the CMHA Yukon Reach Out Support Line. Available daily from 10 am to 2 am at 1-844-533-3030.

There are also mental health emergency contacts available:

9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline

Call or Text 9-8-8

Connect with trained counsellors for culturally sensitive support, empathy, and resources in any crisis, ensuring immediate help is always accessible.



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Hope for Wellness

1-855-242-3310

Offers culturally sensitive support and counselling to Indigenous Peoples, promoting mental wellness and resilience.

24-Hour Residential School Survivor Crisis Line

1-866-925-4419

Provides immediate, sensitive support for residential school survivors and their families, recognizing the lasting impacts of intergenerational trauma.