



A CONCERTED EFFORT

Addictions and Recovery Services Plan for the
Regional District of Mount Waddington



2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The making and completion of this project would not be possible without the tireless and continued efforts of those working in addictions and recovery services within the Mount Waddington Region.

To those that contributed to the development of this strategy, and those that contribute to the betterment of addictions services on the North Island, thank you.

BC Ambulance Services

Centre of Hope—Salvation Army

Cormorant Island Supportive Recovery Society

Discovery Youth

District of Port Hardy

District of Port McNeill

Doctors of BC

Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation

Kwakiutl First Nation

Matthew Jay Van Deventer Photography

Mount Waddington Supportive Recovery Society

Namgis First Nation

North Island Community Services (NICS)

North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre Society (NICCCS)

Quatsino First Nation

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Since the previous Addictions and Recovery Services Plan was released ten years ago, the addictions landscape in Mount Waddington has changed significantly. Most notably, the development of the opioid epidemic which, like the rest of the province, has considerably affected this region. But unlike other healthcare areas, Mount Waddington is experiencing unique issues which enforces the need for a tailored strategy, cognisant of regional differences and available resources. Additionally, increasing rates of alcohol use disorder, inaccessibility to safe and affordable housing, and complex barriers to treatment highlight further issues on the North Island, which demand a multifaceted solution.

The strategic plan for Mount Waddington's addictions and recovery services is rooted in three core principles: improve coordination and collaboration between service providers, raise awareness and understanding about addictions within Mount Waddington communities, and improve cultural awareness and sensitivity towards all individuals and groups within the community. These principles represent the plan's values that reflect the priorities of both community members and healthcare professionals to tackle the most pragmatic concerns in the region. From these principles, six objectives were crafted to focus on specific issues. These objectives were designed to be comprehensive highlighting preventative, primary, and supportive care goals. Following that, the recommended actions require both tangible and intangible resources, leaning on financial and technological assets, along with intellectual capital, relationship building and other human assets. The design of these actions makes them both sustainable and achievable by putting pressure on multiple stakeholders to achieve resolution. This plan has a scope of 3-5 years, but its success requires constant re-evaluation for relevance and accuracy as the state of addictions continues to pivot.

Throughout this plan, there is unavoidable material that is both difficult and sensitive to confront, but ultimately reveals the truth about addictions in Mount Waddington. To no fault of anyone working within the addictions network, the situation has worsened over the past decade. Political, social, and cultural trends have deteriorated addictions care in the region, making it more necessary than ever to guide change towards improved health and wellness for all citizens.

INTRODUCTION

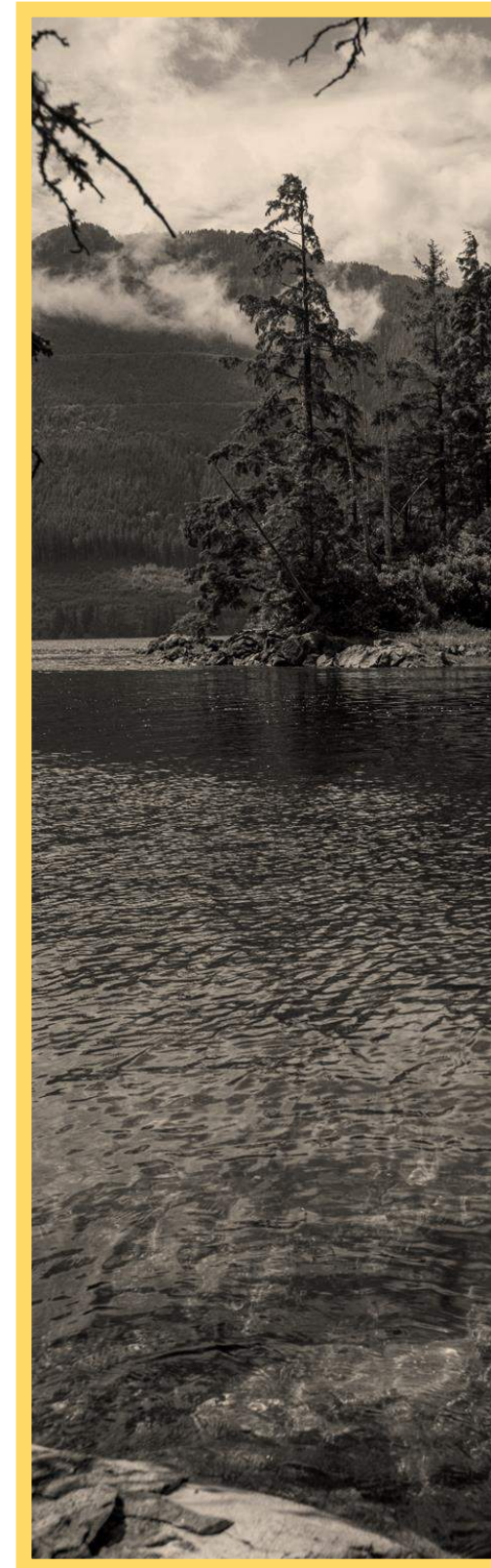
The inception of this project started in 2012 when the first Addictions and Recovery Services Plan was introduced to improve the state of addiction services in Mount Waddington. That plan conceptualized the status of addiction on the North Island and helped improve community engagement and gave insight to new healthcare strategies. Ten years later, this project continues that work and aims to further the region's ability to service those suffering through addiction by customizing a plan to overcome current issues.

Gaining a better understanding of the addictions services in Mount Waddington helps us improve the lives of those with drug dependence, or in recovery, by creating a more supportive environment for their treatment and recuperation. The addictions landscape is constantly changing and that outlines the significance of this plan to grasp the trends within our region and identify the direction that addiction services need to go. This plan is expected to improve the delivery of addiction services and help to create a stronger network to provide constant improvement, innovation, and community-based addictions and recovery services.

The contents of this revision to the Addictions and Recovery Services Plan focuses heavily on the people and cultures in the Mount Waddington region. With the help of numerous healthcare professionals, community leaders, regulators, and those who volunteered to participate in our virtual community forums, we were able to gain data to determine the source of addiction issues, how they impact different subcultures, and suggestions to resolve the most prudent issues.

Our Vision

Building on and bridging the gaps between existing services in Mount Waddington to create a community-based approach to substance abuse issues that is accessible, flexible, comprehensive, and responsive to the needs of the individuals, families, and communities, respectful of human dignity and rights and accountable to those it serves.



CURRENT SITUATION

BY THE NUMBERS

alcohol

5%

Increase in consumption per capita since 2009

27%

Higher consumption rate per capita compared to BC average

43%

RCMP calls that were alcohol related in 2020

Sources: CISUR, 2021; RCMP, 2021

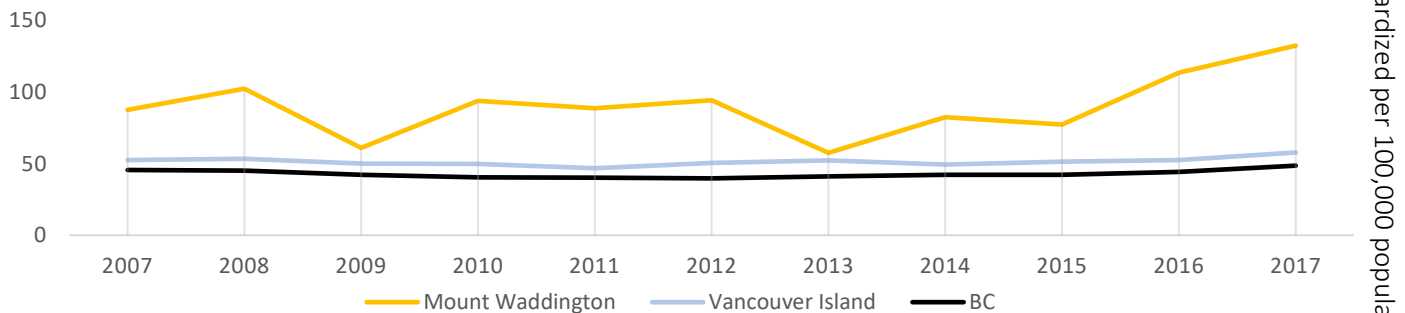
The addictions landscape has changed considerably since the initial Addictions and Recovery Services Plan was released in 2012. Not only have rates of alcohol use disorder risen drastically in Mount Waddington but, like the rest of the province, the opioid crisis has had a major impact on addictions and recovery services on the North Island.

Alcoholism continues to be a tremendous burden on the regional health system, with increasing numbers of alcoholism overwhelming support services. Since 2012 consumption rates on the North Island have continued to rise well above the provincial average, and the gap is widening. RCMP dispatches and regional hospitals have never been busier with the number of cases resulting from substance abuse, increasing the strain on Mount Waddington's health care services without sign of relief.

Most major indicators of alcohol consumption remain unchanged, or at least on par with provincial trends, including unemployment rates, income levels, and marital status. However, one notable statistic that is trending against the provincial average, and worsening over the past decade, is the population percentage without post-secondary education. Currently, 52% of the Mount Waddington population has yet to obtain any post-secondary education, 15% higher than the provincial average (Island Health, 2021). This is a determinant of addictions and substance abuse and a trend that requires more attention.

The most concerning trend is the increase in deaths over the past decade. The number of deaths caused by alcohol in the Mount Waddington region are 270% higher than provincial rates and continuing to trend in a more dangerous direction.

ALCOHOL DEATHS



Source: Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR), 2021

Although alcoholism continues to be one of the biggest addiction concerns in Mount Waddington, the wrath unleashed by the global opioid crisis has not left this remote region unscathed. In the past 3 years, the number of illicit drug deaths have tripled, of which approximately 85% are opioid related. Opioid caused deaths on the North Island are increasing substantially with projected stats putting the region in the fourth most fatal health service area in the province (BC Coroners Service, 2021).

Local health professionals believe these numbers could be much higher as many overdoses are going unrecorded in the region because Mount Waddington victims are dying out of the area. Due to the region's remote location and the large transient labour force, many addictions professionals believe the overdose numbers could be much higher. For example, Mount Waddington has the highest percentage of outdoor (parks, woodlands, etc.) deaths in the province, and the highest percentage of overdoses where the location was unknown or unrecorded. In this case, illicit drug deaths could be 10-20% higher than recorded, when considering out-of-town fatalities.

Making the situation worse, one statistic that is trending downward is the rate of hospitalizations. Hospitalization rates for opioid patients has fallen 15% since 2016, and the percentage of overdose events where transport to hospital has declined has increased by 25% over the same period (CISUR, 2021; BC CDC, 2019). Despite an increase in the lethality of illicit drugs, there are many barriers to treatment amongst users including systemic racism in the healthcare industry, inadequate treatment options and stigmatization within the community preventing individuals from receiving care. Simply, many people feel the hospital is an unsafe place for them to receive care. This topic has heavily influenced this strategy by prioritizing the safety, accessibility and inclusivity of health care and addiction services.

BY THE NUMBERS

opioids

30%

Increase in opioid related overdoses on the North Island since 2012

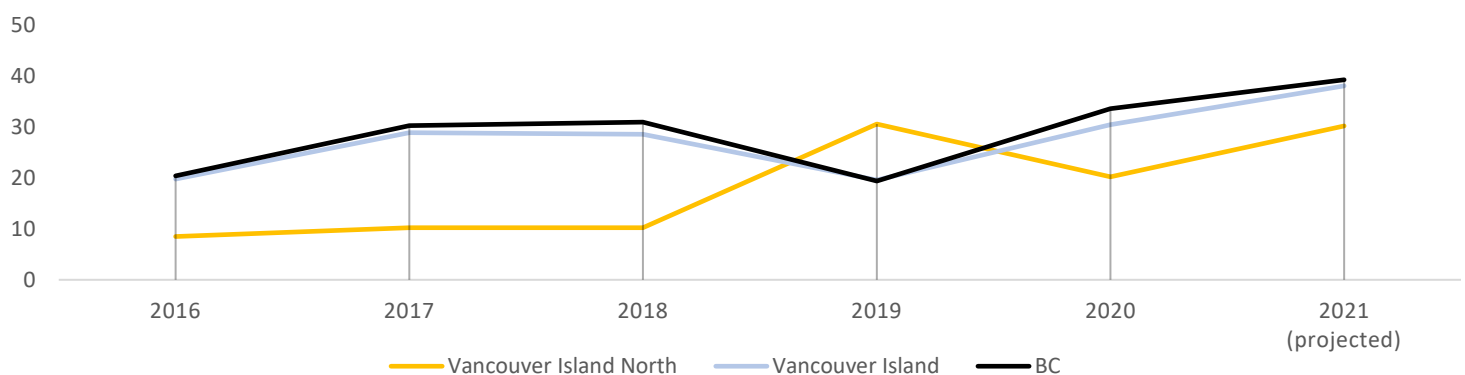
19%

Persons in recovery worried about being stigmatized at opioid clinics.

Sources: CISUR, 2021; BC CDC, 2019

Standardized per 100,000 population.

ILLICIT DRUG DEATHS



Source: BC Coroners Service

GWA'DZI MANAGED ALCOHOL PROGRAM

The Gwa'dzi Managed Alcohol Program (GMAP) has been a unique and innovative approach to the addiction services network in Mount Waddington since 2020. Without a controlled alcohol consumption site present in Port Hardy, GMAP can be the first step towards recovery for those suffering from alcoholism. Those accepted into the program receive a daily prescription of alcohol which inhibits over-intoxication while preventing the patient from experiencing withdrawal symptoms. Daily alcohol may even be delivered to the hospital or even the Port Hardy RCMP detachment if patients are being detained, as the local police force recognize the program benefits and the health implications if doses are missed.

This program is a great example of the community network pursuing solutions to addiction issues in Mount Waddington. This multi-institutional group of professionals in the region are going outside the standardized recovery methods to find resolution, which is necessary given the severity of the situation. Unfortunately, there are still many issues preventing the complete success of this program, none more than the lack of affordable housing. The alcohol addiction problem on the North Island is worsening with addiction as the result of trauma, and the arrival of new migratory patients, but the GAMP gives inspiration to the power and ability of a collaborating network pursuing a common goal.



“The attempt to escape from pain, is what
creates more pain.”

Dr. Gabor Mate

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles encompass this strategy's values, each addressing a critical aspect of Mount Waddington's response to the addiction's situation.

1

Improve coordination and collaboration between service providers

The essence of this principle is to fulfil the need of improving an individual's recovery process through a more coordinated effort amongst service providers. Strengthening the addictions network means improving synchronization between a currently siloed group of professionals, who often have no common platforms for communication, no information sharing abilities and an unharmonious strategy. Unifying the effort amongst service providers will help identify gaps in service, maximize efficiency, and allow the health network to increase its scope on addiction and recovery solutions.

2

Raise awareness and understanding about addictions within Mount Waddington communities

The intention of this principle is to increase public knowledge about addiction services and health care projects to improve overall health care in the region. Increasing public engagement aims to better inform current patients, provide more preventive services, and reduce the stigma surrounding addictions.

3

Improve cultural awareness and sensitivity towards all individuals and groups within the community

Each health region has its own set of challenges and priorities given their geography, culture, and demographics. This principle acknowledges that no standardized addiction plan can be effective. Tailoring specific strategies for specific parties will help personalize the recovery journey and provide increased support for more at-risk groups.

MOUNT WADDINGTON ADDICTIONS NETWORK



OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS



The following objectives outline this project's goals to increase the effectiveness of the Mount Waddington addictions network. The scope of these objectives is meant to be short-term, ideally achieved within the next 3-5 years. They are designed to be manageable over that timeframe, rather than holistic, and thus considerate to labour and budget restrictions. Management of these actions is important and should be adjusted and built upon as required to achieve the overall vision of the addiction's strategy. There are 6 objectives, with corresponding actions, each addressing a separate and urgent need in the Mount Waddington region.

1. Develop youth focused recovery strategies

The youth population in Mount Waddington has been under-served in the community for too long. A lack of support services has contributed to an increase in alcoholism and drug use within this sub-culture. Helping youth who are suffering with addictions requires more attention, closer to home. This means detox centers and youth care-homes for their recovery, along with an increase in youth engagement programs as a preventative care measure.

2. Increase priority for First Nations recovery services

Throughout this project, research has been conducted to determine why the rate of addiction continues to increase in Mount Waddington, and what measures need to be in place to combat this trend. A common theme amongst regional health care professionals is the disproportionate problems faced by our indigenous communities due to the intergenerational trauma rooted in colonialism and the historical mistrust that many First Nations people are trying to overcome. There has been an overwhelming amount of interest in providing more resources towards this issue and focusing more of our addiction's strategy towards this population.

3. Improve supportive services throughout recovery

One of the weak points in the Mount Waddington addiction network is the ability to provide supportive services throughout an individual's recovery. Improvement is needed in the amount and accessibility of sobering and assessment beds, aftercare programs, and secondary housing. The housing crisis is something that greatly impacts addictions and recovery, but the priority should focus on secondary or transitional housing. Out of necessity, the current focus is on primary care, but without improvements to services later in an individual's recovery there is an increased chance of relapse.

4. Strengthen the addictions network

Continuous improvement is a priority of this strategy. This means improving the efficiencies and capabilities of the network towards maximizing the effectiveness of addictions services, prevention, and management. Primarily this objective is met through enhancing the communication between service providers and reducing the disconnect between services. Additionally, to achieve this objective, technology must be better utilized, including the use of healthcare analytics and data collection. Staying up to date with technologies enhances the network's ability to make accurate and timely decisions, while offering a common information platform.

5. Increase public engagement

An area of the addictions network that needs to be addressed is the public perception of addictions care. Given recent insights provided by regional staff, there is a lack of accessibility to addiction information and a lack of public input being received by the addiction network. The goal of increasing public engagement is to change the perception of the addictions network by improving the practices and policies of each service. Using tactics like a public engagement strategy provide a starting point in the region's progression towards fair and proper treatment of all people, with the objective of reducing barriers to treatment and providing a safe and respected destination for addictions treatment.

6. Reduce the stigma surrounding addictions

Considering the opioid epidemic that continues to torment Mount Waddington, it has become more obvious which stigmas act as barriers to addiction services. By no means isolated to opioid use, stigmatization in the addiction's world reduces the effectiveness of services and prevents the necessary care of patients, who may be misinformed, judged, scared, or pressured to avoid care. It is an unavoidable responsibility to not only provide care but also provide a safe means to seek care. Only once we re-examine policies that may inadvertently create barriers, train staff to manage patients appropriately, and alter the language we use in addictions will we start to see a reduction in the stigma surrounding addictions.



GWA'SALA-'NAKWAXDA'XW FLOAT HOUSE

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations have a special project underway which hopes to promote intergenerational healing and help connect people with their traditional territory. The project centers around a float house that will sit permanently in the traditional lands of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations in the Deserter's Group archipelago, in Queen Charlotte Strait. The plan is to build programs, including addiction recovery programs, at the float house where people can remove themselves from harmful environments and seek consolation through ancestral, spiritual, and cultural reconnection.

Concepts like the float house are becoming more popular throughout Canada as bands find ways to connect their people to traditional lands. Incorporating addiction recovery into this concept is another example of how groups in Mount Waddington are finding new ways to deliver recovery programs to decrease the chance of relapse and prevent further health problems.



1 Develop Youth Focused Recovery Strategies

1.1 Create a youth detox centre on the North Island

Any Mount Waddington youth wanting detox must travel to Victoria to receive treatment, which is considered a major deterrent to seeking care. Having a detox facility in Mount Waddington would enable youth to receive care for addictions treatment in their own community, undetached from their support network. Proximity to their home is an important factor in their recovery as they transition to other support programs, and gain assistance in a more familiar setting. Accessibility to their family and local health services can also increase participation in detox programs and aid long-term plans for a successful recovery.

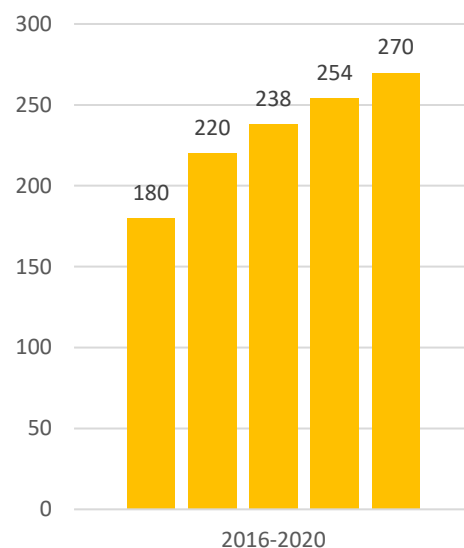
1.2 Promote the need for youth care-homes

A new youth care-home has been sought-after in the Mount Waddington region for over two-years without success. The need to find another successful applicant to serve the community's youth has never been more dire with a disproportionate number of youths in care, and an increasing number of deaths caused by addictions, especially alcohol consumption. Addiction is affecting the youth through childhood and intergenerational trauma and finding a home where they can detox for 3-6 months will provide a more sustainable recovery option. Recruiting for care-home hosts should emphasize the program's positive impact on the community and the compensation available for approved hosts.

1.3 Develop progressive youth engagement programs

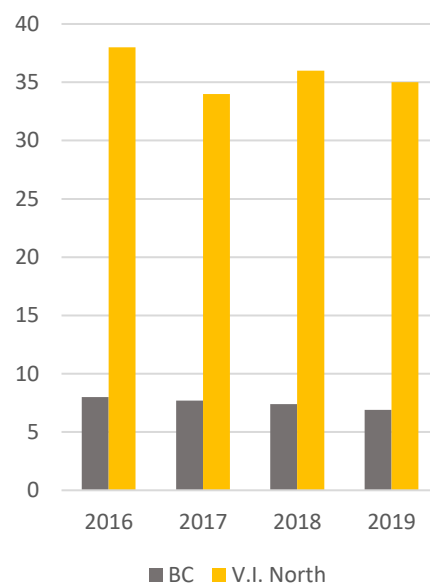
Youth engagement programs provide a preventative solution to addiction by offering youth a creative, physical, or social outlet to participate in. Traditional programs would include sports teams and clubs, but it is important to promote the ideas, skills, and perspectives of the youth to build programs that they engage in and lead themselves. Promoting youth engagement programs enables the youth to pursue new passions and gives them a platform to succeed outside of the traditional avenues of academia and athletics, helping to build lives away from drugs and alcohol use. Reforming the Youth Counsel in Port Hardy is a logical starting point, but the creation of youth board positions or increasing the number of youth community service positions is also strongly recommended.

North Island Deaths Caused by Alcohol, Age 15-34



Source: CISUR, 2021

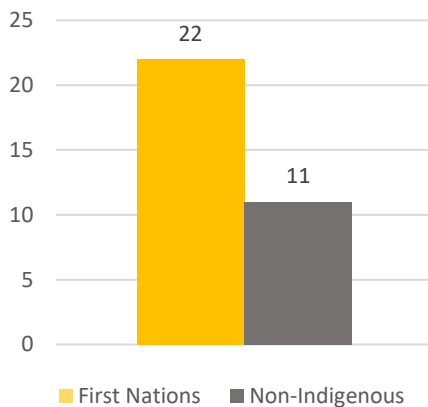
Children and Youth In Care, per 1,000 Youths



Source: BC MCF, 2021

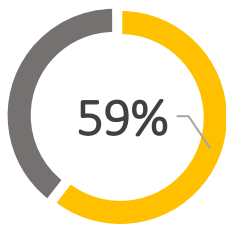
Increase Priority For First Nations Recovery Services 2

Those Avoiding Counselling Services in 2020 (%)



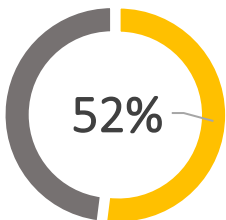
Source: BCCDC, 2020

Indigenous Patients Witnessing Racism



Source: Turpel-Lafond, 2020

Indigenous Health Care Workers Experiencing Racism



Source: Turpel-Lafond, 2020

2.1 Create an Indigenous health and wellness clinic

The addictions network, along with the larger health care system is mainly run by non-indigenous people who do-not and can-not fully understand the best treatment for First Nations communities. This system favours the priorities of non-indigenous patients, ostracizing the needs of the few. The voices from First Nations communities on the North Island are keen to find a space that is culturally appropriate and dedicated to the needs of the First Nations people. This space is needed so patients are less likely to avoid treatment, they can be free of discrimination and stigmatization, and benefit from culturally and spiritually appropriate treatments.

Although a clinic of this nature would provide more than just addiction services, it centralizes care for the indigenous community to break barriers including those in addictions, where First Nations people are completely over-represented. This recommendation looks to reduce addictions harm from a larger scope, helping those not only receive better care, but also establish a better association with the health care system in general.

2.2 Anti-racism campaign

Although not an easy truth to face, it is clear through the findings of this plan and through studies like *In Plain Sight* that systemic racism and discrimination plague the Mount Waddington health network and the community it serves.

In a broad tense, racism creates hate within society, dismantles trust and compromises the safety of everyone. Speaking directly to the addictions network, racism and discrimination increase the stigma associated with addiction services and reduce the likelihood of addiction patients seeking treatment due to mistrust (Turpel-Lafond, 2020). Racism is ruining the effectiveness of our addictions services, translating to increased death rates and improper care. This recommendation is in no way a complete or comprehensive tactic to end the systemic racism embedded in our addiction network, but it is a step towards the public regaining trust in addiction services. To maximize the campaign's effectiveness, it should include new policies for all staff in the addictions network, public acknowledgement of issues, transparent accountability mechanisms, and organizational interventions (Hassen, et al., 2021).

3 Improve Supportive Services Throughout Recovery

3.1 Develop aftercare treatment programs

Aftercare programs are vital for the long-term success of any recovery. The aftercare treatment best suited for each person will depend on their situation and recovery goals, but it is important to have options to prevent relapse. One study showed that those in recovery who attended an aftercare program were 17% less likely to relapse (Moos & Moos, 2006). Considering the success of aftercare programs, and the knowledge that many addictions patients in the region are repeat users, the development of aftercare programs would be considerably beneficial towards improving regional addictions. As many programs as possible should become available, with priority given to a sober living community and peer support groups.

3.2 Secure supportive housing in the region

Supportive or transitional housing is a popular and successful form of aftercare. Supportive housing fills the gap between homelessness and permanent housing supplying an important step in the recovery process. It is a 12–18 month full-time housing solution that provides a bed for those in recovery. This opportunity improves recovery by allowing the time and space to work on new skills, rebuild social networks, and gain addictions support while relieving themselves from the culture and environment of addiction.

3.3 Increase accessibility to sobering and assessment beds

The sober assessment beds supported by the Salvation Army's Centre of Hope are critical for the care and safety of those suffering from addictions, but there is still an overwhelming number of people unnecessarily at regional hospitals. The number of beds through the sobering and assessment program is inefficient, and the hours of operation fail to meet demand. More funding is required to increase capacity and lengthen hours of operation. Individuals should be able to seek care before noon, 7 days a week. Without having appropriate accessibility to sobering and assessment beds, individuals are not receiving the care they need while the system misallocates resources to support them.

BY THE NUMBERS

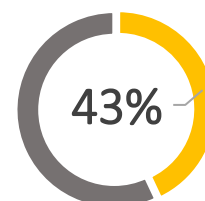
housing

1 Safe house

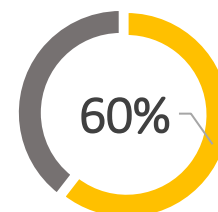
0 Supportive housing beds

Source: BC Housing. 2019

Aftercare Relapse Rate



Relapse Rate without Aftercare



Source: Moos & Moos, 2006

Benefits of Healthcare Analytics

1. Improved efficiency
2. Increased systematic situational awareness
3. Increased insights to enhanced cohort treatment

Talking Circle Etiquette

- 1 Consider the individual needs of the participants
- 2 Respect individual comfort zones
- 3 Ensure participants feel safe
- 4 Be mindful of regional protocols

4.1 Incorporate healthcare data analytics tools

Utilizing data collection services helps identify issues sooner, and with more precision, allowing for more curated solutions. This will help improve the strength of the addictions network by providing a shared platform to collaborate from. Providing hard data to all service providers gives everyone a common lens to assess the strength of their services. Analytics also makes it easier to create and track shared initiatives using key performance indicators. Using hard data to track trends in addiction and recovery services will provide a more accurate and unbiased representation of the addiction's scene in Mount Waddington. Making data-driven care plans is important for the region, where the addictions and recovery scene is worsening, and innovative solutions are required for the distinctive problems experienced throughout the region.

4.2 Addictions sessions

To strengthen the addictions network in Mount Waddington there should be a common and current level of knowledge about addictions and recovery services. Addiction sessions are informative and educational consults that highlight individual topics in addictions. Topics can range from Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) stigmas to new treatments in alcohol use disorder, or any addictions topic that educates and encourages participation. Participants from all addiction's services would be invited to engage and discuss the subject at each session. The goal of each session would be to expand knowledge about a specific subject, while improving the communication and cooperation between addiction services.

4.3 Circle meetings

Much like addictions sessions, circle meetings aim to improve communication and collaboration between addiction service providers. However, unlike addiction sessions, the circle meeting is held to share information about current events and common interests within the regional addictions network. Often called 'talking circles' in some Indigenous cultures, the circle represents equality and sharing, allowing everyone to speak uninterrupted and in-view of the entire audience. Regularly scheduled circle meetings have been successful at maintaining network strength in the past, and it is highly recommended that these meetings continue as soon as practicable.

5 Increase Public Engagement

5.1 Develop a community outreach plan

A community outreach plan is required to meet the goals of informing the public about addictions programs, gathering information on trends and community concerns, and getting more people involved in the addictions network. A committee should be established to manage this plan, as part of the overall addictions strategy to determine the best methods for community outreach and the best practises to achieve their goals. Some suggested tactics are improving social media presence, town halls, information fairs, increasing the number of media releases, and youth assemblies.

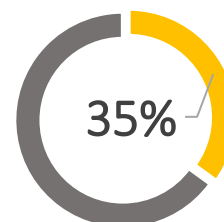
5.2 Create an online community engagement portal

An online engagement portal focused solely on addictions can be a platform to facilitate two-way communication between the addictions network and the residents of Mount Waddington. This platform would invite individuals to share ideas and provide feedback, while sharing updates on new projects and network plans. An engagement portal adds value to the addictions network by providing an additional avenue for interactive engagement, and a singular online location for feedback methods, such as surveys, discussions, and virtual forums. Creating this service fulfills the needs to directly relay information frequently without adding more responsibilities to coordinators and health management.

5.3 Student engagement program

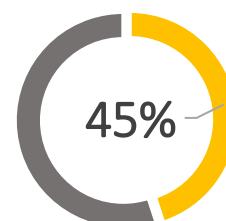
As one of the most at-risk sub-cultures of the Mount Waddington population, focusing engagement on students would have a meaningful effect in the community. Holding an annual assembly, or learning workshop, to inform the youth about addiction issues in their community would be a unique opportunity to speak directly to this vulnerable group. It is also an opportunity to hear from the youth and build relationships between them. The goal of this program should be to inform, gather information, reduce stigma, and improve the youth addiction problem in Mount Waddington.

Internet Users
Searching Health
Information



Source: Statistics Canada, 2020

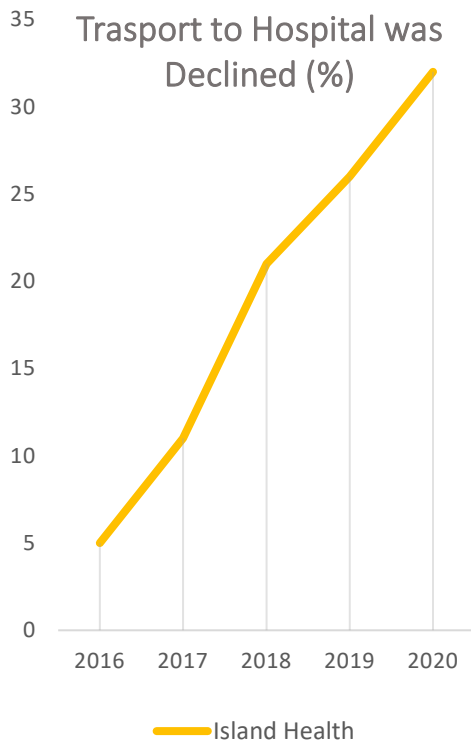
Regional Youth Not
Learning Physical
Health Care in School



Source: BC Ministry of Education, 2017

Reduce the Stigma Surrounding Addictions 6

Overdose Events Where Transport to Hospital was Declined (%)



Source: BC CDC, 2020

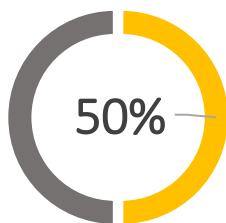
6.1 Cultural awareness and sensitivity training

Culture awareness and sensitivity training for those employed in the Mount Waddington addictions network can help counter the structural stigma associated with addictions. This type of stigma includes institutional barriers where healthcare professionals might take addiction less seriously, inadvertently create policies that cause harm, or fail to educate themselves with available services to find the best care for individuals. This training is more necessary than ever as people are feeling less safe in health care institutions and want to avoid the stigmatization experienced while seeking care.

6.2 Public relations campaign

A public relations campaign should be made with the purpose of reducing the stigma that further impedes people's road to recovery. Optimally, it should be directed at both community members and those suffering through addiction to educate, create awareness, and be candid about the challenges being faced by support workers. The campaign should revolve around normalizing addictions and recovery services to change the cultural stigma attached. Careful and appropriate language should also be used throughout this campaign, which is a key aspect of reducing stigma. Using the appropriate language helps connect patients to services, challenges stereotypes, and shows compassion to those who are suffering from a life of addiction (Health Canada, 2021).

Canadians in Recovery Who Experience Stigma



Source: Health Canada

Steps To Help Reduce Stigma

- 1 Do not define any person by their drug use.
- 2 Be respectful, compassionate, and caring to those who use drugs.
- 3 Educate your friends and family—pass on facts and challenge stereotypes.
- 4 Remember that addiction is a treatable medical condition and is deserving of care just like any other medical condition.
- 5 Be aware of your attitudes and behaviours because they may be influenced by stereotypes, negative stories and images about people who use drugs.

Source: Health Canada, 2021

CONCLUSION

Updating the Mount Waddington Addictions and Recovery Services Plan was emotionally grueling and often difficult to conceptualize. However, the complexity and traumatic nature of this subject matter has been the catalyst for its change, as we look to eliminate determinants to addictions and ultimately improve the state of the region's health. Completing this project would not be possible without the outspoken passion that resonates from community members and addiction stakeholders alike. Gaining personal insight from this region's most emphatic citizens gave life to the statistics and data and helped guide this project's strategy. There is an overwhelming desire in Mount Waddington to change the course of addictions and chart a new path towards a healthier and cohesive life for everyone involved.

Creating a strategy to combat the issues of addiction meant being as inclusive as possible while prioritizing the predominant concerns to make the most immediate and lasting impact. Among these concerns was a lack of cooperation amongst service providers, systemic racism within the health care system, and a lack of public engagement. However, this strategy must remain fluid to the changes within addiction trends and policies, and the external influences that affect the addictions network. To remain dynamic over the near future this strategy leans heavily on the intangible resources available to service providers. This means working with relationships, human assets (intellectual capital), and the addiction network's hard-working culture to achieve the recommended actions of this strategy.

This project is credited to the members of the core working group, who brought their knowledge and experience from various professional fields. Their expertise within the community and within addiction services led the work and initiated a new era of collaboration within the Mount Waddington Health Network. Without their diligent efforts on the North Island the state of addictions would be far worse. It is the hope of everyone that this strategy initiates a new era of addictions and recovery care, through a concerted effort, to overcome the challenges that lay ahead.



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Strategic Outline

Vision	Building on and bridging the gaps between existing services in Mount Waddington to create a community-based approach to substance abuse issues that is accessible, flexible, comprehensive, and responsive to the needs of the individuals, families, and communities, respectful of human dignity and rights and accountable to those it serves.		
Guiding Principles	Improve cultural awareness and sensitivity towards all individuals and groups within every community.	Improved Coordination and collaboration between service providers.	Raise awareness and understanding about addictions within Mount Waddington communities.
Objectives	<p>Develop youth focused recovery strategies</p> <p>Increase priority for First Nations recovery services</p>	<p>Strengthen the addictions network</p> <p>Improve supportive services throughout recovery</p>	<p>Increase public engagement</p> <p>Reduce the stigma surrounding addictions</p>
Recommended Actions	<p>Create a youth detox centre on the North Island</p> <p>Promote the need for youth care-homes</p> <p>Develop progressive youth engagement programs</p> <p>Create an Indigenous health and wellness clinic</p> <p>Anti-racism campaign</p>	<p>Develop aftercare treatment programs</p> <p>Secure supportive housing in the region</p> <p>Increase accessibility to sobering and assessment beds</p> <p>Incorporate healthcare data analytics tools</p> <p>Addictions sessions</p> <p>Circle meetings</p>	<p>Develop a community outreach plan</p> <p>Create an online community engagement portal</p> <p>Student engagement program</p> <p>Cultural awareness and sensitivity training</p> <p>Public relations campaign</p>

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