
FACTSHEET

February 1, 2010

Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
Government of British Columbia

North America's First Supervised Injection Site

In September 2003, Vancouver Coastal Health and partners launched Insite, the first supervised injection site (SIS) scientific research pilot project on the continent. Today, Vancouver remains the only municipality with a sanctioned SIS in North America. There are over 75 SISs in operation worldwide.

- SISs improve the health and social functioning of participants, while reducing drug overdose deaths, HIV risk behaviour, improperly discarded syringes and incidences of injection in public places.
- Insite is leading to increased participation in detoxification programs and addiction treatment. (*New England Journal of Medicine*, June 2006)
- Insite has not led to an increase in drug-related crime. Rates of arrest for drug trafficking, assaults and robbery were similar after the facility's opening, and rates of vehicle break-ins/theft declined significantly. (*Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, May 2006)
- Insite has reduced the number of people injecting in public and the amount of injection-related litter in the Downtown Eastside. (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*, September 2004)
- Insite is attracting the highest-risk users—those more likely to be vulnerable to HIV infection and overdose, and who were contributing to problems of public drug use and unsafe syringe disposal. (*American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, August 2005)
- Insite has reduced overall rates of needle sharing in the community. Among those who used the supervised injection site for some, most, or all of their injections, 70 per cent were less likely to report syringe sharing. (*The Lancet*, July 2005)
- Nearly one-third of Insite users received information relating to safer injecting practices. (*International Journal of Drug Policy*, July 2005)
- Insite is not increasing rates of relapse among former drug users, nor is it a negative influence on those seeking to stop drug use. (*British Medical Journal*, January 2006)
- Insite is preventing overdose deaths and reducing hospital visits. (*International Journal of Drug Policy*, July 2006)
- Independent authorities rigorously review Insite research conducted by the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. To date, all peer-reviewed research papers show SIS is achieving or exceeding its objectives.

From a financial perspective, each instance where HIV is prevented saves the B.C. health care system between \$180,000 and \$225,000 in direct care costs alone. Vancouver's SIS also reduces costs associated with emergency response and hospitalization from overdoses – which instead of being dealt with in an untimely fashion by paramedics on the street, are treated immediately by Insite's medical staff.

As of January 2010, 1,491,324 visits have been recorded since opening in September 2003. There are 11,207 individuals registered. These numbers are rising every day.

InSite annual utilization stats (for the calendar year 2009):

- There were 276,178 visits to the site by 5,447 individuals.
- InSite handled an average of 702 visits daily, up to a maximum of 1,171 visits daily.
- There was an average of 491 injections daily.
- There were 484 OD interventions.
- There were 2,492 clinical treatment interventions.
- 6242 referrals were made to other social and health services, the vast majority of which were for detox and addiction treatment.
- There were 411 admissions to OnSite detox.
- Onsite detox has a 55 per cent completion rate - with the most challenging clientele in Canada.

InSite budget figures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009:

- InSite's operational budget was \$2,946,610 in 2008-2009.
- More than 80 per cent of VCH's total expenditures on addictions are used for treatment and prevention.

For assistance or more information:

Seumas Gordon
Media Relations Officer
Ministry of Housing and Social Development
(250) 387-6490
Seumas.Gordon@gov.bc.ca

Gillian Rhodes
Communications Manager
Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
(250) 952-1902
Gillian.Rhodes@gov.bc.ca

WEB RESOURCES

- Insite Supervised Injection Site – Vancouver Coastal Health:
<http://supervisedinjection.vch.ca/>

MEDIA COVERAGE

- *B.C. court rules Vancouver's Insite safe injection site can stay open* – Vancouver Sun, January 15, 2010
<http://www.theprovince.com/health/Insite+drug+injection+facility+awaits+fate+amid+contro+versy/1767204/story.html>