

BC ECHO on SUBSTANCE USE



BRITISH COLUMBIA
CENTRE ON
SUBSTANCE USE

Monthly Newsletter: February 2021

In this issue of the BC ECHO on Substance Use newsletter, you'll find resources, news updates, and feature articles on topics related to substance use care in BC and Yukon.

Nurses in BC now able to prescribe treatments for opioid use disorder



This month the BC Centre on Substance launched the [Provincial Opioid Addiction Treatment Support Program \(POATSP\): Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses](#) online course, which is now open to RNs and RPNs across BC who are interested in prescribing medications to treat opioid use disorder.

The training will support nurse prescribing of buprenorphine/naloxone (commonly known as Suboxone), which is a first-line opioid agonist treatment (OAT) medication. In September, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry issued a public health order to authorize RNs and RPNs to prescribe some controlled drugs and substances – a first in Canada. The first cohort of RNs and RPNs, representing early adopters from across the province, have recently completed the training developed by the BCCSU.

RNs and RPNs looking to complete the required education and training pathway through the BCCSU must seek formal authorization from their organization. More details are available on the [POATSP website](#).

See below for a link to the decision support tool to support nurse prescribing.

Read more about the new nurse prescriber here:

- Gov of BC news release: ["RNs begin prescribing addiction treatment medications, a Canadian first"](#)
- The Tyee: ["This Can Really Save Someone's Life': First nurses trained to prescribe pharmaceutical alternatives to illicit drugs to substance users in rural BC"](#)

Changing the Story on Addiction Care



Photo: David P. Ball (centre) with co-host Dr. Christy Sutherland (left) interviewing Canadian Drug Policy Coalition's Scott Bernstein for an episode of the Addiction Practice Pod

Produced as part of the [BC ECHO on Substance Use](#), the [Addiction Practice Pod](#) brings clinical training straight to listeners' ears. Co-hosted by David P. Ball, a multimedia journalist with 20 years of experience writing for top global and local news outlets, the podcast provides practical tips and guidance for substance use care from both experts in the medical field and people with lived and living experience.

For this month's newsletter, we sat down with David to talk about how the podcast allows listeners to connect with, and hopefully learn from, the show and apply clinical pearls into their own practice.

- [Profile: Changing the Story on Addiction Care](#)
- [Listen: First season of the Addiction Practice Pod](#)

New resources for substance use care

Decision Support Tools

[LOUD in the ED - Emergency Department Buprenorphine/naloxone Induction](#): Designed for acute care professionals (in-hospital and emergency department clinicians), this decision support tool is meant to be used in conjunction with hospital-approved pre-printed order sets for buprenorphine/naloxone induction.

[RN and RPN Prescribing of Buprenorphine/naloxone](#): This decision support tool outlines how RNs and RPNs who have completed the [education pathway](#) will approach care and when they will need to refer to or consult another provider. Employers are required to set up clear referral pathways to support this practice. This tool is intended to be used alongside applicable BCCNM standards, and within the context of trauma-informed and culturally competent care.

COVID-19 and Substance Use

As COVID-19 continues, the provision of evidence-based, compassionate care to people who use substances is as important as ever. The [BC Centre on Substance Use \(BCCSU\)](#) has developed guidance and other resources to assist prescribers and clinicians in supporting people with substance use disorders at this time.

[BCCSU's list of COVID-19 resources for clinicians and prescribers, service providers, and people who use substances here.](#)

24/7 Helpline Expands to Support Frontline Health Workers in Indigenous Communities



Telephone consultation for physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, midwives, and pharmacists providing addiction and substance use care

Available 24/7, 365 days a year

More info at www.bccsu.ca/24-7

CALL 778-945-7619

The [24/7 Addiction Medicine Clinician Support Line](#) has been expanded to support frontline health workers in Indigenous communities.

The expansion is a three-month pilot project in partnership with First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) to provide resources to address overdoses, which are disproportionately impacting Indigenous Peoples.

The service expansion will increase support and access to health care services in Indigenous communities and will function alongside the FNHA's [Virtual Doctor of the Day](#) service. This pilot initiative will be running from December 2020 to March 2021.

To call the 24/7 Addiction Medicine Clinician Support Line and speak to an addiction medicine specialist, please call 778-945-7619.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.bccsu.ca/24-7/>

BC ECHO on Substance Use programming

Don't forget you can sign up for upcoming session of the BC ECHO on Substance Use at bcechoonsubstanceuse.ca. Here's what's coming up:

Alcohol Use Disorder ECHO

- March 2, 12pm - 1pm: [Considerations for high-risk drinking or alcohol use disorder in pregnancy](#)

Opioid Use Disorder ECHO

- March 11, 12pm - 1pm: [Opioid agonist treatment and pharmacy](#)
- March 25, 12pm - 1pm: [Transitions between pharmacotherapies for opioid use disorder: Methadone to buprenorphine/naloxone](#)

Joint Alcohol and Opioid Use Disorder ECHO session

- April 13, 12pm - 1pm: [Managing co-occurring alcohol and opioid use disorders](#)

Registration

You can join the BC ECHO on Substance Use at anytime. If you've already signed up, don't forget to complete your registration at bcechoonsubstanceuse.ca and support our evaluation of this programming.

We want your cases!

During the ECHO sessions case presenters from diverse clinical backgrounds (e.g., family practice, nursing, pharmacy) have an *opportunity to receive guidance and recommendations on patient cases in their practice from addiction experts*. Presenting a case includes submitting a brief written case summary and joining an ECHO session to give a 5-minute de-identified overview of the case and questions for clinical consultation. To submit a de-identified patient case for an ECHO session, providers are asked to fill out the [case presentation form](#), or submit a brief paragraph summary, and send to BCECHOonsubstanceuse@bccsu.ubc.ca.

News and features from the BC ECHO on Substance Use and partners

[News \(from BC Coroners Service\): More than 1,700 lives lost in 2020 due to toxic illicit drugs](#)

[News \(from Health Canada\): Government of Canada supports first national guideline on high-risk drinking and alcohol use disorder](#)

[News \(from Health Canada\): Government of Canada supports four safer drug supply projects in British Columbia](#)

[News \(from BC Gov News\): Funds support access to addictions treatment, recovery services during COVID-19](#)

[Report \(from B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth\): Detained: Rights of children and youth under the Mental Health Act](#)

[Resource \(from Toward the Heart\): BCCDC Opioid Overdose Response Toolkit](#)

Remembering Ron Kuhlke

We're very sad to share that Ron Kuhlke, who was a member of the BC ECHO on Substance Use Steering Committee and a hub team member of the Alcohol Use Disorder ECHO series, passed away last month.

In addition to his work on ECHO, Ron was involved in countless organizations — Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society (WAHRS), Eastside Illicit Drinkers Group for Education, and the DTES SRO Collaborative. He was also engaged in BCCSU work from guidelines to education to research.

Ron was an incredible champion for people in his neighbourhood and his work reached well past the boundaries of where he lived. He was a well-know advocate in his SRO building, where he has successfully defended his neighbours against illegal eviction and played a critical role in forcing his landlord to restore the building's heat and hot water during a particularly cold winter.

Here's a story from 2016 [profiling Ron's advocacy for his neighbours](#) in the Lion Hotel

Everyone on the BC ECHO on Substance Use team will miss him.

The BC ECHO on Substance Use aims to build confidence and skills among primary care providers and their teams in British Columbia and Yukon. By bringing clinicians with addictions expertise and primary care providers together in a substance use community of practice, we hope to improve the implementation of evidence-based care in our communities.

This newsletter is one part of the BC ECHO on Substance Use, an initiative funded by Health Canada and the GPSC, a partnership of the Government of BC and Doctors of BC. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada or the GPSC.

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