

B.C.'s first overdose prevention site for women only opens on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside



By Yuliya Talmazan

Online News Producer Global News



A women-only overdose prevention site is opening its doors on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

SisterSpace is B.C.'s first overdose prevention site for women only, made possible through a partnership of Atira Women's Resource Society, the City of Vancouver, BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH).

"We've heard from some women in our community that they feel safer and more supported when they are able to access services in women-only settings. Some will altogether avoid places where they know certain men will be, so this new women's-only option is critical," said Bonnie Wilson with VCH in a release.

"Once women are away from situations where their safety is in jeopardy they can begin addressing their physical and emotional

health needs,” Wilson said.

The site, located at 143 Dunlevy Avenue, will be home to the new service, where up to 15 women at a time can inject illicit substances and be monitored in a safe environment. The site is open daily from 6 a.m. to noon and from 6 p.m. to midnight.

A nurse practitioner will also provide primary care services, such as chronic disease management, pregnancy testing, and screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections.

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Last year, 914 people died of overdoses in B.C. amidst a public health emergency that was declared by health authorities in April.

The latest numbers released by the BC Coroners Service showed there were 120 suspected drug overdose deaths in March, a 51.9 per cent increase over the number of deaths that occurred in the same month last year.

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