

Women-only overdose prevention site opens in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

SisterSpace at 135 Dunlevy Street can accommodate up to 15 women at a time in a monitored and safe space

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A first of its kind overdose prevention site for women only has opened in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

SisterSpace at 135 Dunlevy St. can accommodate up to 15 women at a time in a monitored and safe environment for injecting illicit substances.

"We know that women, like those working in street level sex work, have some unique challenges accessing health services in the Downtown Eastside," said Dr. Patricia Daly, Chief Medical Health Officer for Vancouver Coastal Health.

A women's-only site is an important link in helping vulnerable women access help during the ongoing opioid overdose crisis, according to site organizers.

"We've heard from some women in our community that say they feel safer and more supported when they are able to access services in women-only settings," said Bonnie Wilson, lead for Women's Services with Vancouver Coastal Health.

"Some will altogether avoid places where they know certain men will be so this new women's-only option is critical."

A nurse practitioner will provide primary care services such as chronic disease management, pregnancy testing, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and the staff has been trained to administer naloxone.

The site is open daily from 6 a.m. PT to noon and from 6 p.m. PT to midnight.

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