

CCSA's National Conference



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction



ISSUES of SUBSTANCE

Vancouver, BC

A Guidebook to Services and Supports



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This document can also be downloaded as a PDF at [ccsa.ca](https://www.ccsa.ca).

Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre :

Questions de substance 2023 du CCDUS : Guide sur les services et les soutiens

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Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the Provincial Peer Network (2022) and British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (2023) whose conference handbooks served as guides for this resource.

Land Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge that CCSA's Issues of Substance conference will be held at the Vancouver Convention Centre, which is located on the unceded and unsurrendered traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətaɫ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Welcome

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) is excited to host its 2023 [Issues of Substance](#) Conference in Vancouver from Nov. 20 to 22, 2023.

We hope you'll find the conference an engaging experience, and we hope that you'll share your expertise and make meaningful connections with people from across Canada who share an interest in learning about substance use health.

This guidebook is intended as a resource for people with lived or living experience of substance use. It includes information about local resources, harm reduction services, and supports that will be available at the conference centre and in the community. It was inspired by feedback from people with lived or living expertise, and other resources created by and for people with lived experience of substance use.

Thank You

We thank and acknowledge the people with lived or living experience of substance use who contributed their time and expertise to provide advice and direction on how to support the physical and psychological safety of conference attendees. Their contributions have helped CCSA understand the Vancouver context as well as the broader systemic barriers to providing harm reduction and support services to people who use substances.

While we were not able to implement all the recommendations brought forward by our partners, this was an invaluable learning opportunity to ensure Issues of Substance and CCSA continue to grow as a welcoming and supportive environment for all people across the substance use health spectrum.

Thank you to the many individuals at the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), [BC Centre for Substance Use](#) and [Vancouver Coastal Health](#) who have helped us integrate a Vancouver-informed and -specific approach at the conference.

Important Considerations

The drug supply in Vancouver is known to be toxic and deadly. CCSA has put many supports in place; however, these services can't guarantee safety in the current setting. If you're feeling particularly at risk, unwell or uncertain, travelling to Vancouver may not be the best option. If so, please email us at ios@ccsa.ca to discuss the situation as there are other options for us to partner and collaborate.



Conference Information

The Issues of Substance Conference will take place at the Vancouver Convention Centre at 1055 Canada Place.

The registration and information desk is on the Convention Level of the East Building of the Vancouver Convention Centre. Staff will be available during the following hours:

Sun., Nov. 19: 4–8 p.m.

Mon., Nov. 20: 7 a.m.–5:15 p.m.

Tues., Nov. 21: 7 a.m.–5:15 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 22: 8–11 a.m.

View the full Conference Program IssuesOfSubstance.ca/conference-program

Hotel Information

Pan Pacific Hotel Vancouver

999 Canada Place, #300

604-662-8111

Check in: 3 p.m.

Check out: 12 p.m.

Pinnacle Hotel Harbourfront

1133 West Hastings Street

604-689-9211

Check in: 4 p.m.

Check out: 12 p.m.

The hotels offer many amenities, including onsite restaurants and free internet access.

Smoking policy: Smoking is not permitted in the hotels. There are designated smoking areas outside the hotels for guests.

Room costs: Guests are responsible for any extra room charges during their stay.

Photo ID: The hotels require guests to show photo ID and provide a credit card number at check-in. If this poses any difficulties, please contact ios-info@ccsa.ca.

Getting to your hotel by SkyTrain:

- Cost: \$4.88
- Take YVR-Airport Station at Platform 1 to Vancouver City Centre Station
- Time from Vancouver City Centre Station to hotel:
 - It's about a 12-minute walk to the Pinnacle Hotel Harbourfront
 - It's about a four-minute walk to the Pan Pacific Hotel Vancouver

Onsite Supports

A variety of services and supports will be available. (Please see map below.) All counsellors and support providers will have access to a private space should you wish to have a private conversation.

Room 7

This space will have harm reduction supplies, naloxone kits and information about local resources and offsite community-based services and supports.

Room 9

There will be supports in this space for survivors of residential schools, their family members, and those experiencing intergenerational trauma. Counsellors from the [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](#) will be present to provide trauma-informed, emotional and culturally appropriate wellness support.

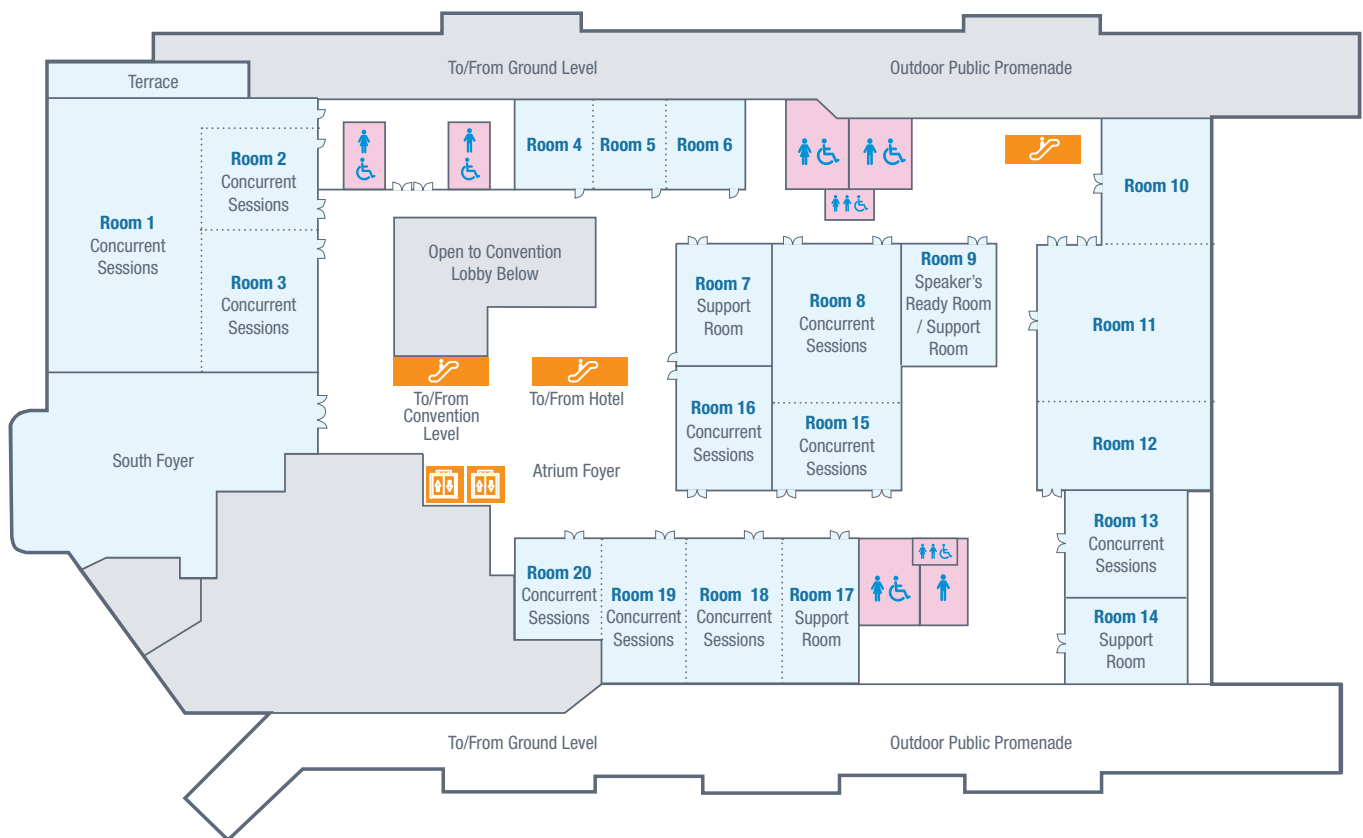
Room 14

This space will have information about local resources and community-based services and supports. On Mon., Nov. 20, concurrent drop-in session B9 will take place in this room from 1:30 to 3 p.m., providing an opportunity to interact with therapy dogs.

Room 17

A licensed counsellor will be available to provide support to anyone during conference hours.

Map



Naloxone

Naloxone kits will be available at the registration desk and in Room 7. You don't need ID or a health card to get a naloxone kit at the conference.

There are several local distribution sites and pharmacies that distribute naloxone. They can be located using this tool: [Toward the Heart – Find a Site](#).

Transportation Supports

Taxi chits will be available to individuals who need support accessing community services and supports, such as supervised consumption services, overdose prevention sites, drug-checking services and community resources. Taxi chits are available from CCSA staff at the registration desk and Rooms 7 and 14.

Drug Toxicity

The supply of substances in Vancouver is known to be very unpredictable.

If you use substances, please be very careful and note that even smoking drugs has been linked to an increasing number of drug toxicity deaths.

Please take care of yourself and those around you.

Here are some important tips and resources:

- Please never use substances alone.
- Carry naloxone and know how to use it. Learn more at [Naloxone Saves Lives](#).
- To locate overdose prevention sites and supervised consumption sites, use this [Vancouver Coastal Health map](#).
- Have your drugs tested at a nearby drug-checking site. Learn more at [Vancouver Coastal Health Drug Checking](#).
- To sign up for toxic drug alerts, text the word JOIN to 253787.
- [Download the Lifeguard Digital Health app](#), which provides a variety of health-related supports including drug toxicity response.
- [Download the Brave app](#), which provides drug toxicity detection for people who use drugs.

Phone and Support Lines

Call toll-free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (unless otherwise noted)

National Overdose Response Services (NORS) virtual safer consumption hotline:
1-888-688-NORS (1-888-688-6677)

Suicide crisis line serving people at risk for suicide: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)

310 Mental Health Support: 310-6789 (no area code needed)

KUU-US Crisis Line Society serving First Nations, Métis and Inuit people: 1-800-588-8717

Hope for Wellness Helpline serving Indigenous people: 1-855-242-3310

Trans Lifeline hotline serving trans people in crisis: 1-877-330-6366

Crisis Centre Chat 12 p.m. to 1 a.m., Pacific standard time: 1-800-721-0066



Offsite and Virtual Supports

Rapid Access to Addiction Care (RAAC) Clinics

These clinics offer addiction care and are temporary, short-term stabilization clinics that connect people seeking treatment for substance use disorders with evidence-based treatments.

The closest RAAC clinic to the conference centre is:

St. Paul's Hospital

1081 Burrard St.

The RAAC entrance is on Thurlow St.

Open daily, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed daily from noon to 1 p.m.).

Call 604-806-8867 (press 4 for the intake or social worker)

Walk-ins are seen on a first-come, first-served basis until they have reached capacity for the day.

If you're coming from out of the province, you may be seen at the clinic, but you will have to pay for any medication prescribed out-of-pocket.

For more information, visit [Rapid Access Addiction Clinic \(RAAC\), Providence Health Care](#).

Supervised Consumption Sites (Overdose Prevention Sites) Closest to the Vancouver Convention Centre

The closest OPS to the Vancouver Convention Centre are:

Thomas Donaghy OPS (distributes naloxone)

1101 Seymour St.,

Open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Insite

Distributes naloxone

139 E Hastings St.

Open daily from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m.

Sister Space

Provides services to women, trans women, genderqueer women, and non-binary people who are significantly femme-identified

135 Dunlevy Ave.

Open daily from 6 a.m. to noon and from 6 p.m. to midnight

SisterSquare Inhalation Tent

Women and women-identified individuals only

Corner of Jackson Ave. and Powell St.

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Find supervised consumption sites and OPS in and around Vancouver and related information at [Supervised Consumption & Overdose Prevention Sites, Vancouver Coastal Health](#).

Drug-Checking Services

Test strips

Test strips will be available at the Vancouver Convention Centre in Room 7.
For instructions on using test strips, visit [Fentanyl Drug Checking Strip](#).

Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) machines

FTIR machines can provide more detailed information about what is in certain substances. FTIR machines and technicians are available at the following locations:

Insite

139 East Hastings St
Vancouver, V6A 1N5
Open Mon. to Fri. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information about drug checking and drug checking services, please visit [Drug Checking, Vancouver Coastal Health](#).



Websites

Toward the Heart has many Harm Reduction resources:
[A-Z Resource Page](#) | [Toward the Heart](#)

National Overdose Response Service: [NORS](#)

Wellness Together Canada (mental health and substance use support for people in Canada): [Wellness Together Canada | Home](#)



Apps

[Lifeguard Digital Health](#)

[Brave](#)

Meetings

Self-Management and Recovery Tools: [SMART Recovery Meetings](#)

Community Addictions Peer Support Association: [Peer Support Meetings 2023 - CAPSA](#)

Abstinence-Based Services

Vancouver Recovery Club

2775 Sophia Street
604-708-9955
[Vancouver Recovery Club](#).

Narcotics Anonymous

Virtual and in-person meetings
[Narcotics Anonymous – Vancouver Area](#).

Alcoholics Anonymous

Virtual and in-person meetings
[Alcoholics Anonymous – Meetings in Vancouver](#).

Coordinating Prescriptions

If you take medication and need to coordinate a prescription, please plan ahead, especially if you're coming from out of province. For example, you may consider asking your doctor for take-home doses (carries) for opioid agonist therapy (OAT). If you need a letter indicating when you will be in Vancouver, CCSA is happy to provide one. Please email ios-info@ccsa.ca.

If you are arriving from within British Columbia, you can coordinate the prescription transfer between your usual pharmacy and the pharmacy you will use while at the conference. For detailed instructions on how to do this, please see the Appendix on page 9.

If you are arriving from out of province

1. Choose a pharmacy where you will go to pick up your prescription. See the list of pharmacies in the next section.
2. Go to the pharmacy shortly after you arrive and bring the following items:
 - Photo ID (for example, health card, provincial ID, driver's licence)
 - The name of your health insurance benefits provider if you have one and your policy number (bring your card if you have one)
 - Prescription label
 - Name and contact information of the pharmacy you normally go to

If you are coming from out of province and receive social assistance

You will need to pay cash for the medication and a pharmacy dispensing fee.

Most social assistance programs will reimburse the cost with a receipt. Please keep these with you.

Local Pharmacies

The pharmacies listed are those closest to the Pan Pacific Hotel Vancouver, the Pinnacle Hotel Harbourfront (CCSA's conference hotels) and the Vancouver Convention Centre.

CCSA does not endorse any of the pharmacies listed.

Pharmasave

Offers in-store shopping, pick-up and delivery, naloxone training and distribution.

Bentall Centre, Retail Level

400–1055 Dunsmuir St.

Open Mondays to Fridays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

604-682-7755

Coal Harbour Pharmacy

Offers in-store shopping, pick-up and delivery, naloxone training and distribution.

622 Bute St., Unit B

Open Mondays to Fridays 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sundays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

604-336-3038

Rexall

Offers in-store shopping, pick-up and delivery, naloxone training and distribution.

Waterfront Centre

200 Burrard St., Unit #R010

Open Mondays to Fridays 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

604-681-2195

Shoppers Drug Mart

Offers in-store shopping.

1202 West Pender St.

Open daily 9 a.m. to midnight

604-605-1200

Things to Do in Downtown Vancouver!

You can use the TransLink website or app to plan your trip. For more information, visit [TransLink Trip Planner](#).

Stanley Park

Stanley Park is a natural rainforest in the heart of downtown Vancouver with beautiful beaches and mountain views. For more information about Stanley Park and other recreational activities offered by the City of Vancouver, visit [City of Vancouver – Stanley Park](#).

Granville Island

Granville island has a public market open daily from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and more than 50 vendors. For more information, visit [Granville Island – Planning a Visit to Granville Island](#).

The Seawall

The Seawall is the world's largest seafront path and can be accessed right from the Vancouver Convention Centre. It is a great place to walk, jog and cycle to enjoy beaches and mountain views. For more information, visit [City of Vancouver – The Seawall in Vancouver](#).

For more ideas, visit Issues of [Substance 2023 – Vancouver Attractions](#).

Appendix

Transferring a Prescription from Within British Columbia

1. Call the pharmacy you want to transfer your prescription to.
2. Give them your full name as it appears on your health card.
3. Explain that you are attending a conference in Vancouver and provide the dates you'll be there.
4. Ask that your daily prescriptions are transferred to the pharmacy for the dates you'll be in Vancouver and then transferred back.
5. Give them the name and address of your usual pharmacy and the name of your pharmacist.
6. Request that this is completed for yourself or the person on whose behalf you're calling and ask them to call you the day before the conference to confirm.
7. Ask the Vancouver pharmacy to ensure it has the necessary stock of medications for your prescriptions to be filled on those days.
8. Ask them what time you should go to the pharmacy on Nov. 20, so you can plan your activities around it and confirm that you'll bring ID with you.

References

British Columbia Centre on Substance Use. (2023). *The challenge of change: Conference guide for people with lived or living experience of substance use*. Vancouver, B.C.: Author.

Provincial Peer Network. (2022). *Provincial peer convergence*. Vancouver, B.C.: Author.