



## Working Group Activity Update – 29 January 2021

We're pleased to announce the formation of Cowichan Tribes' Opioid Crisis Response Working Group. Following the [recommendations](#) of Cowichan Tribes' Opioid Crisis Response Task Force, Chief and Council designated a standing Working Group to lead our nation's ongoing response to the opioid overdose epidemic.

### ***Working Group Staff Members:***

- **Erin Kapela**, Lead, Acting Manager Kwun'atsustul
- **Jen Charlie**, Co-Lead
- **Derek Thompson**, Acting General Manager
- **Sharon Henry**, Administrative support
- **Toni Williams**, Youth Centre Program Manager/Youth Shelter Manager
- **Michelle Louie**, Embracing Life/Prevention office Manager
- **Stella Nilsson**, Lead for Harm Reduction Team/RN

### ***Working Group Advisory Members:***

- **Georjeana Paterson**, Regional Manager, Mental Health and Wellness, FNHA
- **Jenny Peters**, Regional Addictions Specialist, Mental Health and Wellness, FNHA
- **Cpl. Jeremy Evans**, North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP
- **Amy Rosborough**, Indigenous Lead, Cowichan Primary Care Network

### ***Working Group Vision:***

A strong, safe, healthy Nation, free from addiction and overdoses, where members get the services and supports they need, delivered by Cowichan Tribes and firmly grounded in Quw'utsun culture.

### ***Working Group Mission:***

Lead and coordinate Cowichan Tribes' ongoing response to the crisis of addiction and overdoses.

Working Group staff members will meet weekly or bi-weekly. The full Working Group will meet monthly. We will provide monthly activity updates to members.

**Contact:** Jen Charlie — [opioid.taskforce@cowichantribes.com](mailto:opioid.taskforce@cowichantribes.com)

**TI'i' to' mukw' mustimuhw - Each person is important**



## Working Group Priorities and Projects

We will achieve our vision and mission through the following work streams:

1. **Service Delivery** including overdose prevention and harm reduction, direct outreach and support for at-risk members and youth, detox referrals, addiction treatment and recovery support, counselling, mental health & cultural support.
2. **Collaboration** to prevent overdose deaths and improve services and supports, within Cowichan Tribes and with external partners.
3. **Communications** on overdose prevention, where to get help, ending stigma and shame, and creating a culture of health grounded in Quw'utsun culture and healthy families.
4. **Advocacy** to improve access to culturally safe services for members.
5. **Community Engagement & Information Gathering** to understand what is needed to address the crisis of addictions and overdoses.
6. **Final Report & Recommendations** for long-term solutions to address the crisis.
7. **Feasibility Study** for Cowichan Tribes to establish our own detox and treatment centre(s), including safe housing and wrap-around supports for members in recovery.

*Info on overdose prevention & where to get help: [cowichantribes.com/opioid-response](https://cowichantribes.com/opioid-response)*

## January Highlights

- The Working Group held its first meetings on January 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Cowichan Tribes' Harm Reduction and Outreach teams are providing enhanced in-person supports to at-risk members and youth, and distributing harm reduction supplies and Narcan, food, and medicines.
- Kwun'atsustul enhanced on-call counseling and addiction support to seven days a week.
- Members in need of safe housing have benefited from staying in designated tenting sites and at the Ramada. People at the sites receive medical care, meals, outreach support, COVID-19 screening and Pandemic Safe Supply. Folks are saying it's the safest they've felt in years and that their lives are becoming more stable.

