

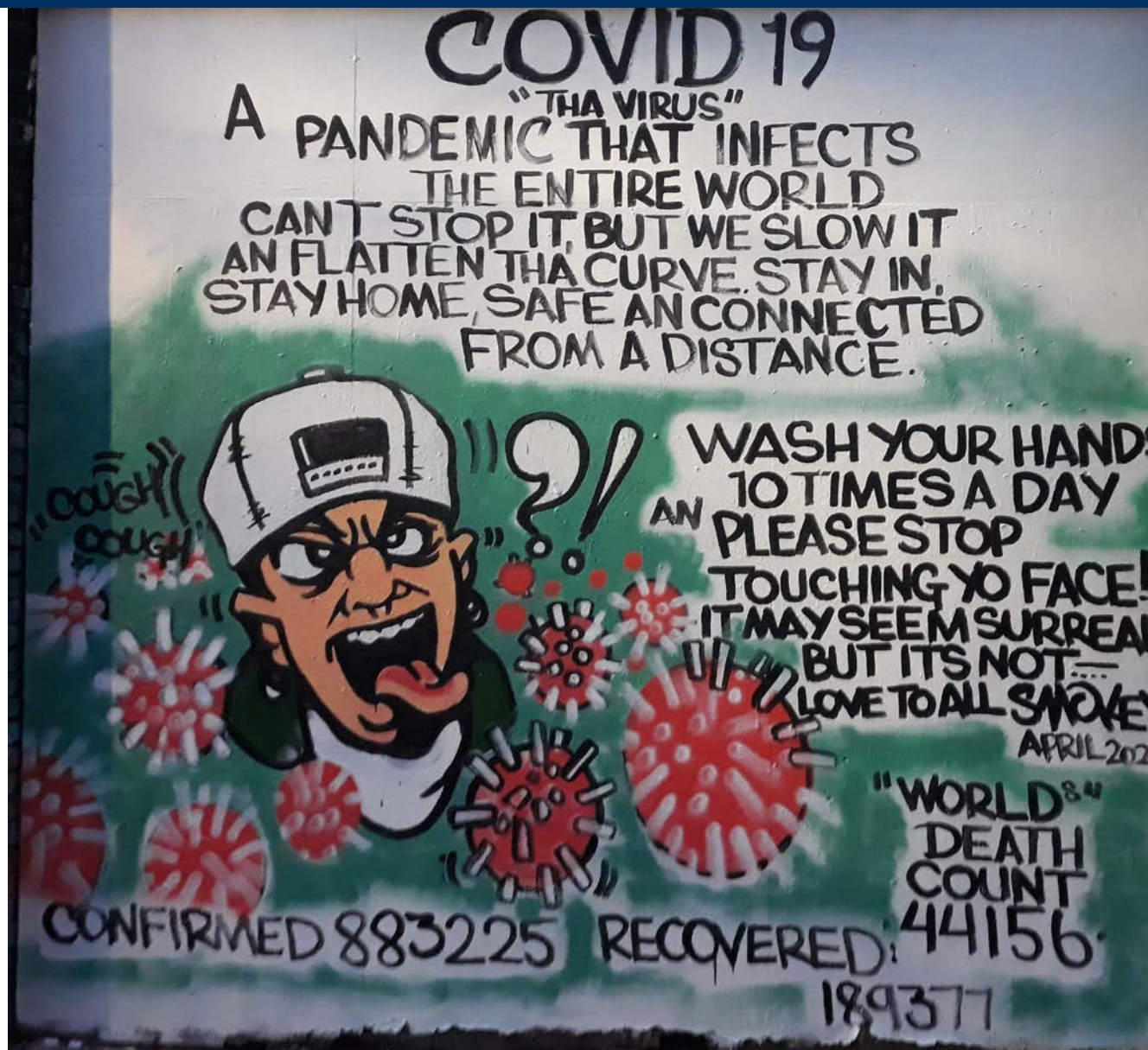
Update to Council:

Downtown Eastside COVID-19 Response Actions

Presented by:

Sandra Singh, GM ACCS
EOC Community Resilience Branch

4.28.2020



- Provide an overview to Council on COVID19 Response to support DTES communities, with a focus on actions across:
 - Equity and Inclusion
 - Shelter and Housing Support
 - SRO Support
 - Peer Work and Community Stewardship
 - Safe Supply and Overdose Prevention
 - Essential Hygiene
 - Street Cleaning and Sanitation
 - Food Security

*This presentation does not include city-wide COVID19 response actions.

COVID19 impacts are disproportionately experienced by communities in the DTES.

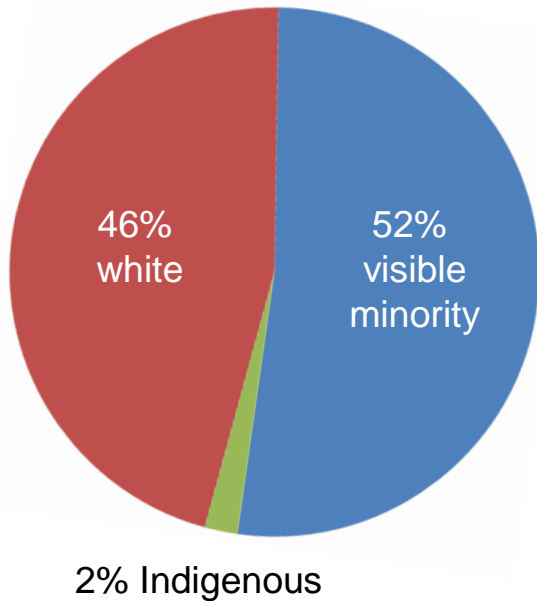
- **Homeless/precariously housed** – inadequate conditions for social isolation/quarantine if sick, reduction in staff and volunteer supports, increase in homelessness, decrease in shelter spaces due to physical distancing of beds
- **DTES residents living in deep poverty** – limited access to health supports, family doctors, phones, computers, televisions and internet, washrooms, open public spaces, green space, income security and quality housing
- **Narrowing of services** – closure of gathering spaces, reduced access to essential medicine, washrooms, grocery stores, banks shutting down for cheque cashing
- **Income insecurity** – shut down or reduction in informal economy, DTES market, binning, sex work, job loss
- **Food insecurity** – reduction in charitable food programs, disruption of food supply chain, closure of low-cost grocery stores in Chinatown/DTES.
- **Barriers to critical information** – language, cultural relevance, access to mainstream communications channels, trust in government

Operational Risks and Challenges

- Non-profit & charitable sector capacity
- Mental and physical health for staff and frontline workers
- Critical supplies (i.e.: PPE) for shelter, food, and health services
- Confirmation of ongoing senior government funding for response & securing of more permanent housing solutions

1. Equity and Inclusion

**City of Vancouver
demographics**



Source: Statistics Canada

More than half of Vancouver residents identify as Indigenous or visible minority, according to Statscan.

Embedding equity and inclusion in emergency response is critical to ensuring our actions are inclusive of everyone, especially those who face the highest systemic, structural, and language barriers.

Many Vancouver residents speak a language other than English in their home and as their mother tongue.

The spread of coronavirus disproportionately impacts racialized people and equity-seeking groups.

The Community Resilience team includes staff with cultural competencies, lived experience, multilingual skills and strong relationships with diverse communities and networks.

Urban Indigenous Communities

1. Staff Community Liaisons with Community
Urban Indigenous Planner & MMIWG Planner

2. Urban Indigenous Emergency Response
Led by MVAEC, Partnership with VCH
Aboriginal Health and City of Vancouver. Will
coordinate urban Indigenous leadership for
response and recovery stages.

3. Indigenous Outreach to Women & Girls -
Matched community needs to UWLM to fund an
Indigenous team providing daily access to
culture, food and supports

**4. Enhanced Community Stewardship
Program, Vancouver Foundation, Reaching
Home including funding for urban
Indigenous programs**



METRO VANCOUVER
ABORIGINAL EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL

British Columbia

**Indigenous friendship centres hit hard by
skyrocketing requests for help, advocate says**



People who don't usually use their services are now asking for assistance

CBC News - Posted: Apr 22, 2020 7:00 PM PT | Last Updated: April 22



COVID-19 concerns have closed friendship centres in Vancouver and Surrey, but clients are asking for help online and by phone. (WANNEESH HAMILTON/CBC)

Friendship Centres across Canada are receiving \$3.75 million from Ottawa to deal with COVID-19, but B.C. branches say that's not enough to meet demand that's grown 200 per cent during the pandemic.

Eighteen of those 25 centres in towns and cities across the province are now closed due to concerns about the spread of the virus, including facilities in Vancouver and in Surrey. But their services are still in demand by phone and online, says the head of the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

"We're devastated that we can't help more than we can. There's so much ask," Leslie Varley told CBC's *On The Coast* Wednesday.

新型冠状病毒 (COVID-19) 须知事项

目前，市政服务尚未受到新冠病毒（COVID-19）疫情爆发的影响。

温哥华沿岸卫生局表示，在温哥华市内，新冠病毒的风险仍然较低。

为了保护大家的健康，您可以这样做：



洗手。



咳嗽或打喷嚏时遮
掩口鼻。



感觉生病了？
请呆在家里。

我们将对公共健康风险进行持续评估，并在风险水平发生变化时对市政服务做出相应调整。

要了解最新信息，请访问 vch.ca。

Ensuring COVID-19 response actions are inclusive:

- Providing critical information in the most commonly used languages in Vancouver
- Developing multilingual webpages (phased approach)
- Hosting public "town halls" with multicultural media
- Disseminating critical information/resources through community networks, non-traditional channels

Ensuring actions are informed by ethnocultural communities:

- Proactively engaging with ethnocultural, language-, faith-based communities in Vancouver
- Elevating urgent community issues to the EOC (e.g. incidents of racism)
- Providing on-the-ground situation reports
- Strategic input on COVID-19 response with an equity lens to help ensure disparities are not exacerbated

Funding Partnerships

1. Vancouver Foundation: Issued over 100 grants in past 4wks for health, social, arts and culture. Total \$6.5M; \$4M expended in Vancouver/Metro.

Top 3 needs across a range of populations:

1. Food security (doubles in terms of demand compared to highest need);
2. Information and mental health supports;
3. Equipment/tech to change/adapt NPO services

3. United Way Lower Mainland, Vancouver Food Banks + Federal & Provincial Funding

4. Mobile Device Donations & Wi-Fi Access

vancoover
foundation

OUR WORK

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Community Response Fund

DONATE NOW



COVID-19 is leaving kitchen outbuildings bare across the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley. Mass layoffs and underemployment are affecting our friends, neighbours and family members leaving many struggling to pay rent and buy food.

United Way of the Lower Mainland is responding quickly to the devastating effect COVID-19 is having on food security. By mobilizing a network of community partners, businesses and local residents, United Way is working to ensure everyone - children, families and seniors - has access to the food they need.

2. Shelter and Housing Support

2,223
**PEOPLE IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS IN
VANCOUVER ON MARCH 13, 2019**

614 UNSHELTERED

1,609 SHELTERED

- Sub-optimal conditions for self-isolation and physical distancing.
- Reduced shelter capacity due to need for increased spacing between beds.
- Reduction in staff and volunteer capacity.
- Limited access to supports.

- BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health and City of Vancouver working closely together to provide shelter and supports for people who are experiencing homelessness and are precariously housed.
- A joint Working Group and Steering Committee to evaluate and implement emergency response.
- Deliverables include
 - Identification and activation of 400+ emergency spaces (hotels and ERCs)
 - Streamlined processes for new site emergency response shelter / hotel identification and activation
 - Intake and Transition processes
 - Rapid response cleaning protocol
 - Ongoing inter-agency response to emerging issues

Response Centres & Hotel Spaces

- **143 spaces** have been secured at Emergency Response Centres (Coal Harbour and Roundhouse Community Centres)
- **~500 hotel** and other spaces leased by BCH
- BC Housing has extended operation of **10 temporary** winter shelters
- Specific spaces for populations at risk, including youth and women/families fleeing violence
- VCH and BC Housing responsible for referral process, assessing applications to determine the most appropriate space for the individual depending on health and support needs



Oppenheimer Park – Provincial Announcement



- April 25: Province issues order under the Emergency Program Act to that people need to vacate the park by May 9
- Targeting an estimated 300 individuals in and around Oppenheimer Park to be moved to 300 accommodation spaces in the form of hotels and hostel rooms, and supportive housing units
- BC Housing and PHS leading work, in partnership with VCH and the COV
- BC Housing, in partnership with CoV (ACCS/VAHA/PDS), working on comprehensive long-term plans to secure permanent housing with appropriate supports

3. SRO Support – Private & Public

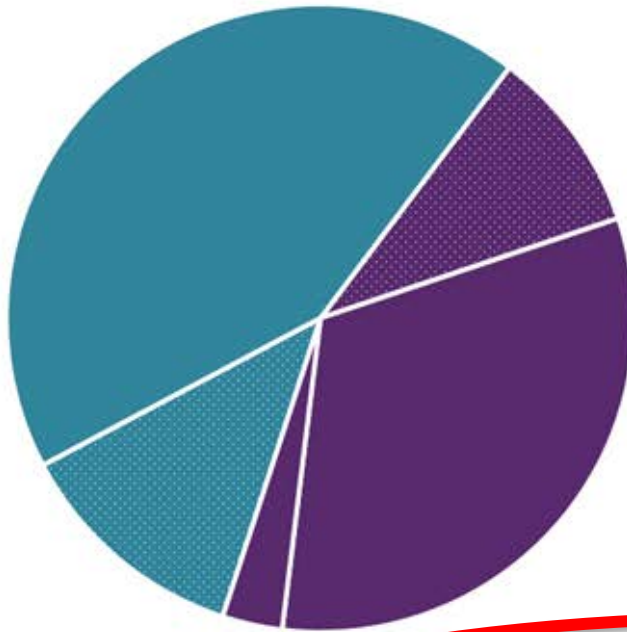
~6,900 private and non-profit/government owned SROs providing a last resort before homelessness for City's most marginalized tenants

Persistent Challenges ... Exacerbated by COVID19:

- Hotels are 100+ years old, inadequate to resident health and safety needs
- Improving quality while keeping rents affordable impossible without gov't investment; stemming loss of affordability from investor/speculators
- High proportion of tenants hard on housing; need for robust wrap around supports
- COVID-19: Shared washrooms, cooking facilities and maintenance challenges create risk for transmission amongst low-income, elderly, immune-compromised,
- VCH Public Health identified "worst" buildings as potential risk for rapid transmission

SRO Stock – CoV COVID19 Response

Total: 158 Buildings (6,891 rooms)



Privately Owned and Operated – 43%

(87 buildings, 3,050 rooms)

Non-Profit Owned and Operated – 10%

(11 buildings, 508 rooms)

Government Owned and Operated – 32%

(37 buildings, 2,330 rooms)

Chinese Society Owned and Operated – 3%

(9 buildings, 156 rooms)

Privately Owned and Non-Profit Operated – 12%

(14 buildings, 847 rooms)

Goal: Coordinated and strategic public health response that addresses the existing and COVID-19 related risks faced by tenants in public and private SROs

Roles and Responsibilities:

- VCH – Strategic public health guidance and direction
- BC Housing – Supports for BC Housing directly managed and non-profit SROs
- City of Vancouver – Private SROs, including Chinese Society Buildings, City operated SROs

Shared Operating Principles:

- Equity of support for low-income tenants in private and public SRO Hotels
- Ensuring a robust public health response across SRO stock

“COVID doesn’t care about ownership or operator” (VCH)

1. Tactical Cleaning/Disinfecting Support for Private SROs

- Funded by CoV (2 weeks) and BCH (4 weeks); Tactical deployment aligned with VCH guidelines
- DOES NOT replace base building standards of maintenance requirements by private owners or direction to follow VCH cleaning guidance (2-3X per day)
- **# of Private SRO Disinfecting Cleans provided = 67**

2. SRO Tenant Cleaning Kits

- Personal cleaning kits to empower and equip all tenants to protect themselves from Covid-19 transmission
- Funded by CoV and private donations = approx \$20K to date
- Issues: supply chain limitations, cross organization needs, speed of donations
- Adjusted Goal: 500 kits for deployment to suspect and confirmed sites in partnership with VCH RTT
- **# of Tenant Cleaning Kits distributed = 18**

3. Food and Meal Deployment

- Provide meal delivery to low-income SRO tenants to support physical distancing and address food insecurity resulting from COVID-19 economic impacts (public and private donors)
- Culturally appropriate food program for Chinatown SROs and Society Buildings (temp funding via private donor)
- Time-limited, temporary funding = CoV (\$200K), BC Housing (\$200K) and Private Donors
- **# of private SRO/hotel tenants receiving food support = 2044**
- **643 COV tenants receiving daily meal hampers; 36,000 meals to date**

Other Initiatives:

- Education and outreach with VCH to private owners to support COVID-19 best practices and update on changes to public health guidance (incl. translation)
- Coordination with SRO-Collaborative and community partners/peers
- SRO Revitalization Strategies & SRA By-law – monitoring and implementation
- Forward Planning with Partners

4. Peer Work Redeployment

1. DTES Resident Network

First week of Operation: March 23 Innovative, Rapid Response Process

- COVID-19 Response & Drug Policy Advisor
- Rapid redeployment ~ 12 peers/day
- Focus on access to critical information, outreach (bank accounts, safe supply), communications and policy

2. DTES Market - Peer Redeployment

- DTES Market formally shut-down (Mar)
- Peer managers redeployed to COVID-19 response
- Vendors received emergency benefit to encourage 'staying home'

British Columbia

The mural and the message: How a community advocate and a graffiti artist are spreading facts on the DTES



COVID-19 art an effort to get accurate public health information to people who may not have access to it

Karin Larsen · CBC News · Posted: Apr 07, 2020 4:59 PM PT | Last Updated: April 7



A COVID-19 mural by artist Smokey D is pictured in the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver, British Columbia on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. (Ben Nelms/CBC)

9 comments

The colourful but slightly icky image of a coughing man spewing viruses resembling giant spiked balls grabs the eye while the adjacent words communicate the important information: Stay home, wash your hands, don't touch your face. Take COVID-19 seriously.

The mural with the message popped up in the heart of the Downtown Eastside on the weekend, not hidden down an alley but right out on Carrall Street, plain for everyone to see.

And that's exactly the point, says community advocate Karen Ward, who, in collaboration with artist Smokey D, created the public art in a effort to pass on a few basic facts about the coronavirus pandemic.

"We know that people here don't have newspapers, don't have media or internet necessarily," said Ward. "They hear their news on the street and so that's still how to communicate best with a lot people."

Mural: Smokey D, Karen Ward

Enhanced Community Stewardship Program



\$200K City Contribution - 6 Weeks Peer Work

First week of Operation: April 10



Innovative, Rapid Response Process & Partnership Established

- CIRES holds and administers funds as independent org
- Community Review Committee established
- Community agencies coordinate available peers and match with community needs
- CIRES invoiced weekly by participating organizations and cheques are processed within 3 days
- Weekly meetings are held by all participating organizations

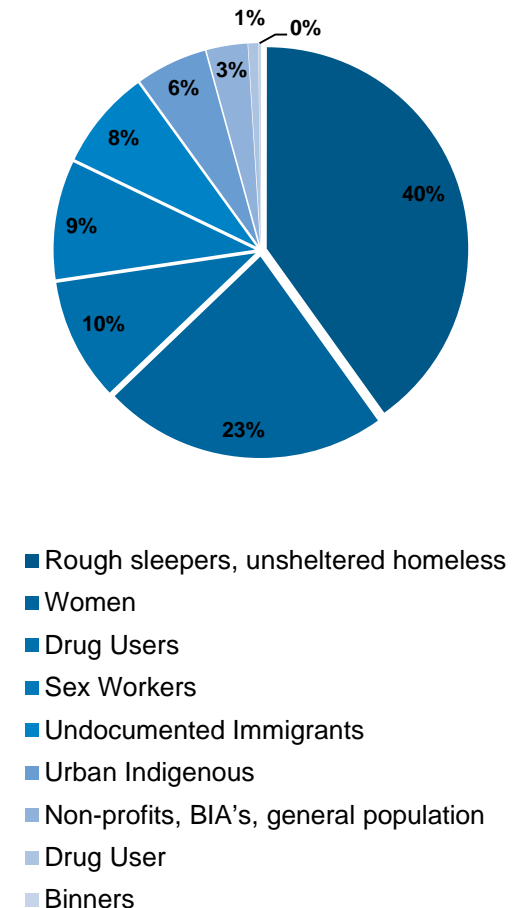
Enhanced Community Stewardship Program

Week 1: 72 Peers, 1184 Hours/Week

Week 2: 98 Peers , 2035 Hours/Week

- **10 organizations, strong equity focus**
 - Atira, Mission Possible, OPS, Watari, DEWC, SPIRIT, Friends of CCAP, Aboriginal Front Door, Binners Project, Raise the Rates
- **11 groups served**
 - Survival sex workers, women, undocumented immigrants, unsheltered homeless, urban Indigenous, binners, drug users, non-profits, BIAs, residents
- **Types of peer work initiatives**
 - Physical distancing, wellness support, food donation & distribution, litter and needle pick-up, security, cleaning and sanitation supplies, outreach, service navigation, access to critical information

Amount Paid to Peers by Group



Enhanced Community Stewardship Program

"These funds are much appreciated by the community. It's provided the ability to support individuals who are undocumented and experiencing other challenges... We've distributed food hampers to more than 100 families... peer workers distributed health information including info translated into other languages...' **Ingrid, Watari**

"This money has been transformational for people who typically wouldn't be paid for peer work - pickup/distribute food, supplies, peer packages. ... we're reaching out to those who would not actively seek out medical care" - **Meriah, SPIRIT**

"This has helped us focus on people unhoused at/near Main and Hastings, provided food security for people in Oppenheimer Park, organized. We've also tried to prioritize Indigenous women. We've been able to provide hygiene supplies and info, where to go for food. Community support has been great (e.g. donations, food containers, carts, food, etc). Elders have been able to donate salmon, halibut" - **Fiona York, Friends of CCAP**

"The peers are organizing other people, they are becoming leaders and it's been important to trust people - **Raise the Rates**

Sex Workers are especially impacted by COVID-19 & COVID response

Summary of City Role

- Staff liaison role to coordinate all sex worker supporting orgs + hired new Sex Worker Liaison
- Request to Province for 50+ hotel spaces
- Enhanced Community Stewardship Program – 10 sex worker peer workers/week deployed
- Vancouver Foundation – Support for sex worker organizations: WISH, PACE, Transitions Consortium (20 peer supports)
- UWLM – Meals program
- Matched 100 mobiles distributed by Telus and private food donor to sex worker community

Gaps

- Access to safe space, including 24/7 support and access to washrooms and showers for sex workers & people who identify as women
- Access to income security – sex worker relief fund to ensure that everyone in community is safe and supported



The screenshot shows a news article from The Globe and Mail. The headline is "Sex workers say they're at risk, have been left out of Canada's COVID-19 response". The author is Teresa Wright, Ottawa, and it was published on April 19, 2020. Below the headline is a video player showing a woman, Valerie Scott, speaking. The article text discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sex workers, noting that many have lost their income and are facing financial hardship. It mentions that some sex workers are still working despite the risks, and that the government's response has been inadequate. The article also mentions that some sex workers are facing discrimination and stigma.

Sex workers say they're at risk, have been left out of Canada's COVID-19 response

TERESA WRIGHT
OTTAWA
THE CANADIAN PRESS
PUBLISHED APRIL 19, 2020

155 COMMENTS SHARE

Valerie Scott, a sex worker in Toronto who also does advocacy with the group Sex Professionals of Canada, says she is disappointed that Ottawa has not come forward with more direct help for the marginalized women in her field.

JOHN MORSTAD/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Sex workers saw their incomes disappear overnight when the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread in Canada. Now many are in desperate situations: in need of food, rent, basic necessities. Some are now homeless and without any income.

Some facing especially stark realities are continuing to work – even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Susan Davis, a sex worker and advocate with the BC Coalition of Experiential Communities, says she's aware of many who are still working, including a friend with three children who does sex work to top up her disability support payments.

"She has no choice but to go back to work to feed her kids, and put herself and all of her entire family at risk because of this unreasonable assumption that people who are on welfare or disability know how to live on that so they can make it by, while newly unemployed people are acknowledged by government as needing \$2,000 a month," Ms. Davis said.

Many sex workers in Canada either do not qualify for the federal government's Canadian Emergency Response Benefit or they are afraid to apply.

TRENDING

- 1 Monday's Insider: Dragons' Den star million in this sto
- 2 Gordon Page: Five to hold through the turbulence to com
- 3 OPINION: A second wave co President
NIALE FERGUSON
- 4 OPINION: Ask about Alberta fear and loathing
MAX FAWCETT
- 5 TD picked to lead \$10-billion corpora program

5. Safe Supply & Overdose Prevention

- Overdose Crisis exacerbated by COVID-19 Crisis (isolation, health inequities, access to safe supply)
- Safe Supply Guidelines for Enhanced Access
- New Outdoor Overdose Prevention Site at 62 E Hastings
- Access to Critical Information & Services



COVID-19, SUBSTANCE USE & SAFER SUPPLY




Clinical guidance to reduce risk of infection and overdose

Presenters
Guy Felicella
Peer Clinical Advisor, BC Overdose Emergency Response Centre (OERC)
Cheyenne Johnson
Co-Interim Executive Director, BC Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU)
Dr. Andrea Sereda
Family Physician, London InterCommunity Health Centre (LIHC)
Matthew Bonn
Program Coordinator, Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs (CAPUD)

**WEDNESDAY
APRIL 8**

3pm - 4pm ET
12pm - 1pm PT

WEBINAR REGISTRATION:
bit.ly/covid19substanceuse

6. Cheque Day Plan

Cheque Day – COVID-19 Impacts

Approximately 4,000 residents receiving Income Assistance do not have bank accounts/electronic transfer options, requiring 'in-person' collection and/or cashing.

In addition, Canada Post had announced an intention to discontinue post to Hastings blocks with high volume clustering.



1. Partner – City working to Innovate & Respond

- Ministry of SDPR – Canada Post, ID, Electronic Transfers
- Vancity/Pigeon Park Savings – Bank Account/ID, Distribution Pilot, Peer Workers
- DTES Resident Network – Access, Outreach & Information
- Vancouver Coastal Health – OD Response, Outdoor OPS

2. Advocate – for people with lived experience/homeless

- For Emergency Supplement, disbursement models - Ministry of SDPR \$900 (\$300 Apr, May, June)
- ID issuance for bank account

3. Invest – City working with community partners

- DTES Market Peer Deployment at IA Offices, Pigeon Park Savings
- 12 Hour Hastings Street Lane Closure Pilot – Columbia to Carrall – Room to Queue

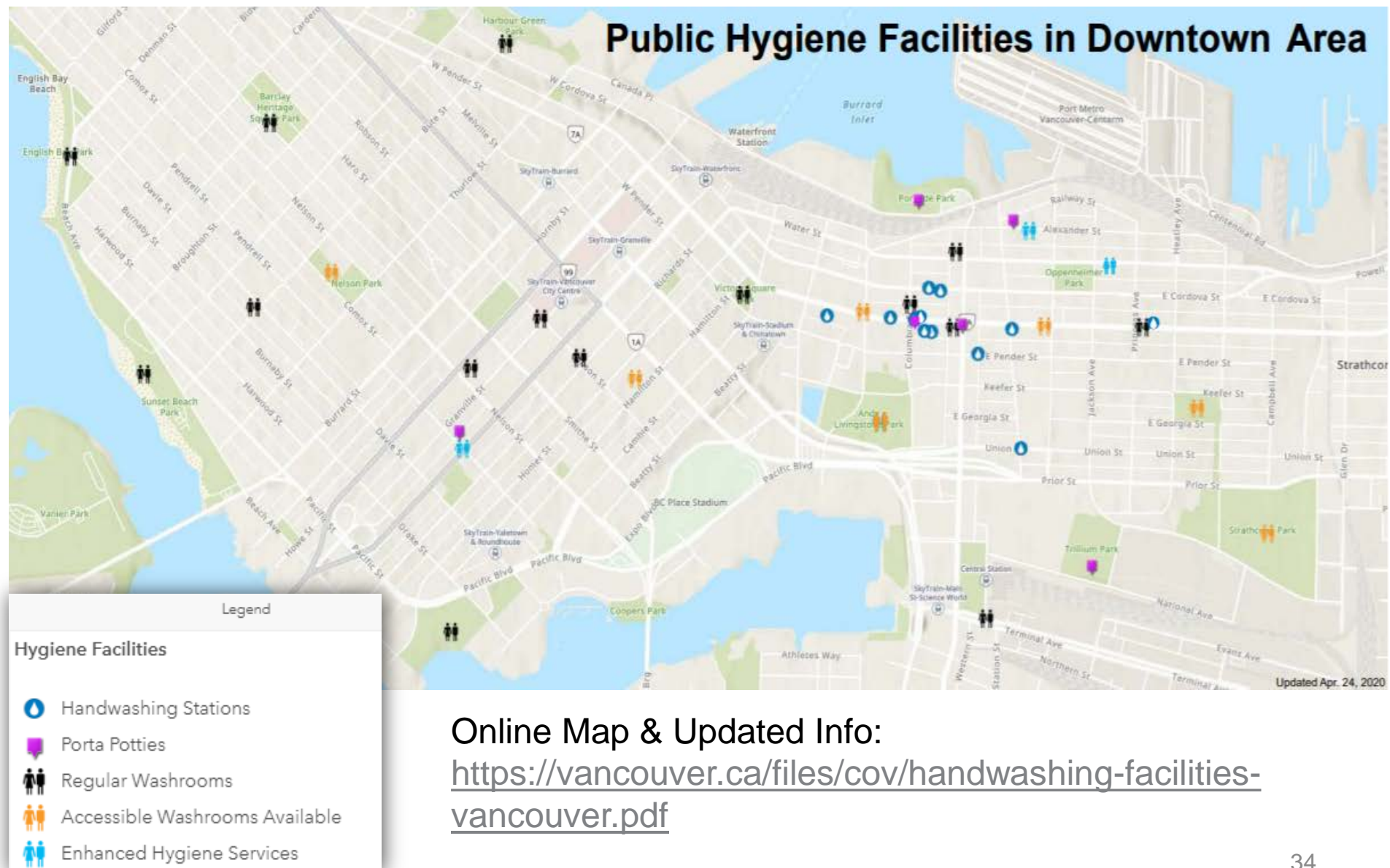
Hastings Lane Closure Pilot



7. Hygiene

Handwashing & public hygiene stations

Public Hygiene Facilities in Downtown Area



Online Map & Updated Info:

<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/handwashing-facilities-vancouver.pdf>

Showers and laundry operating out of Evelyn Saller and Gathering Place

- 1591 loads of laundry and 1755 showers since March 21 (capacity 75 per day)

Hand washing stations

- Temporary handwashing stations deployed along Hastings are being replaced with more robust handwashing stations created from the hydration stations that the City deploys in the summer.

Washrooms

- Emergency porta-potties deployed in select locations
- VCH direction and in consultation with community consolidated to better monitor safety
- Strategy underway to re-open Evelyn Saller & Gathering Place washrooms and deploy more robust trailer facilities

Planned activities:

- Temporary handwashing stations deployed along Hastings are being replaced with more robust handwashing stations created from the hydration stations that the City deploys in the summer.
- The first two of these stations will be deployed this week, with more to follow.
- Reviewing deployment in other locations where a need has been identified.

8. Street Cleaning and Sanitation

Enhanced Street Cleaning & Sanitation

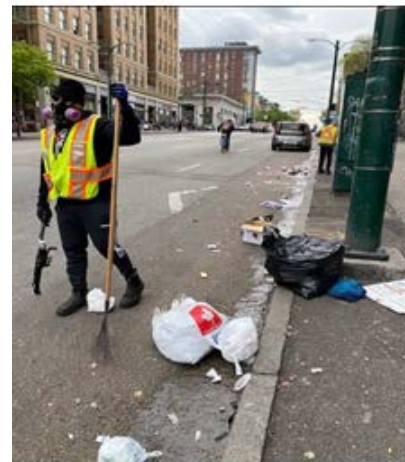
1. High level of service (primarily on nightshift):

- flushing and cleaning lanes of large debris, human waste, abandoned items etc., street sweeping and litter collection
- Afternoon shift focuses on emptying litter cans, litter removal and street sweeping



2. Enhanced day time:

- Provide additional litter collection, sweeping and debris removal on E. Hastings from 1:00pm to 3:00pm
- Increased sidewalk sweeping on Water St in Gastown, Evelyne Saller and Carnegie Centre



9. Food Security

Food Security Response in DTES

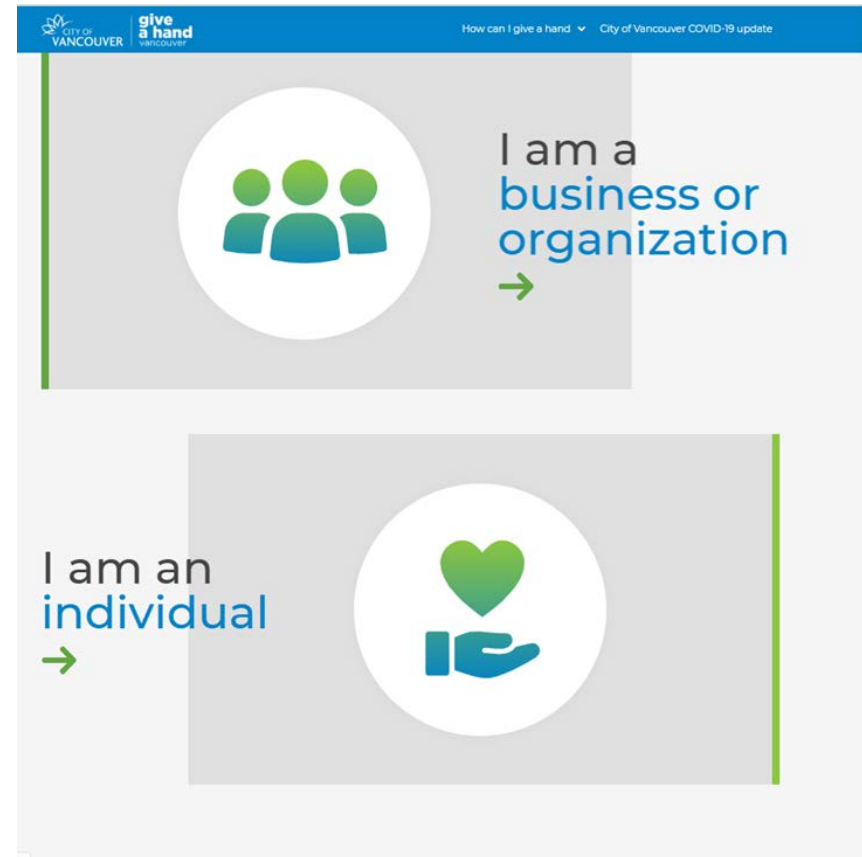
- Variety of responses to address the current COVID-related meal gap in DTES to restore and increase food access, and support physical distancing
- Needs assessment and brokering of solutions with funders, charitable sector, and private donors
- Prioritizing support for agencies that provide free and low cost food
- Private SRO meals provided by Potluck, VCC (BC Housing Funded) and private donors
- Expansion of food services from Evelyn Saller, Carnegie and Gathering Place (1700 meals per day, 10% growth)



Generous donations and offers from our community have included:

- Food and food supplies
- Water
- Transportation / delivery
- Masks
- Soap
- Essential clothing
- Phones and data plans
- Hand Sanitizer

www.giveahandvancouver.ca



END