

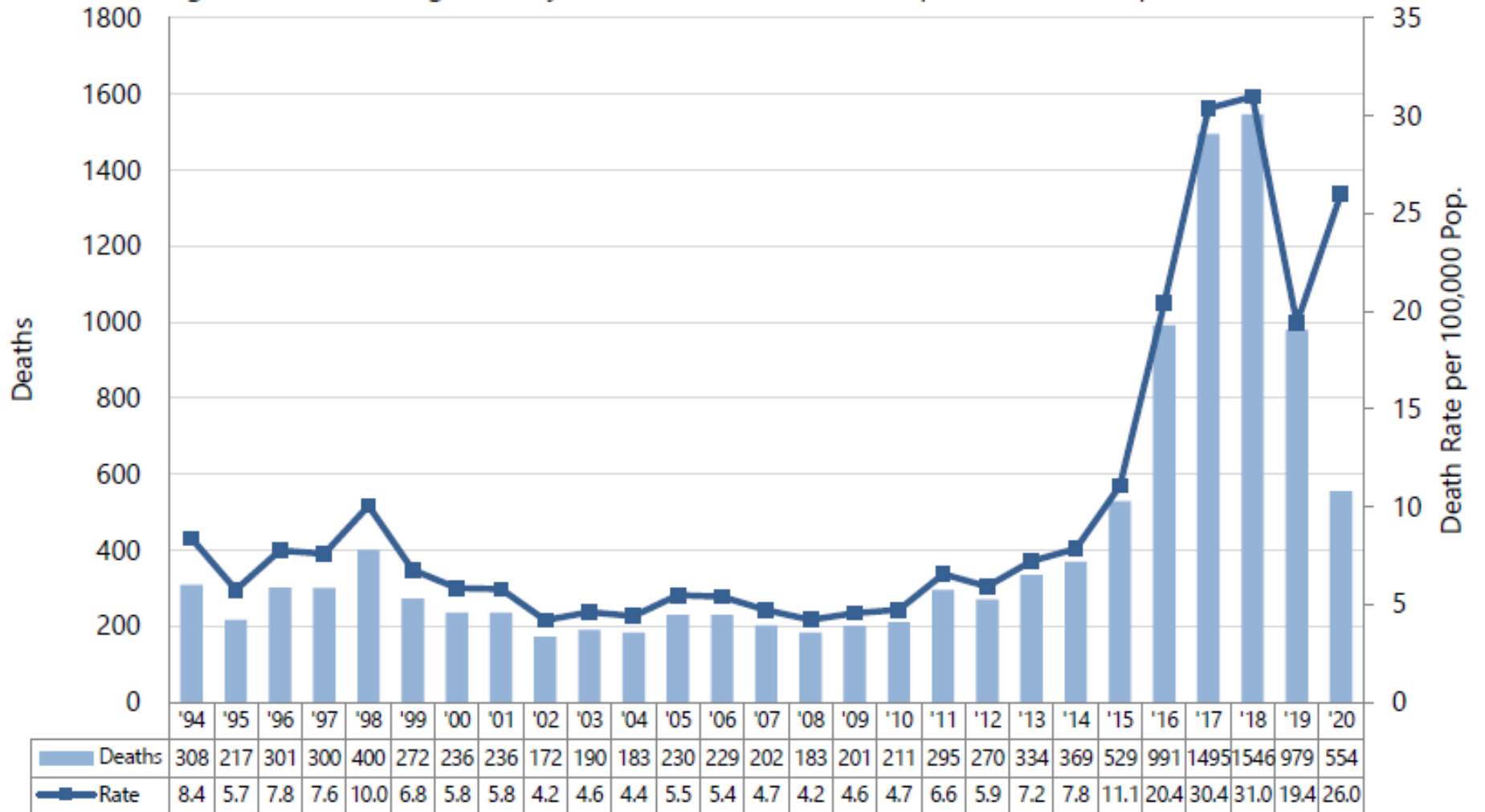
Update to Vancouver City Council Opioid Overdose Emergency

Dr. Patricia Daly
Chief Medical Health Officer

June 23, 2020

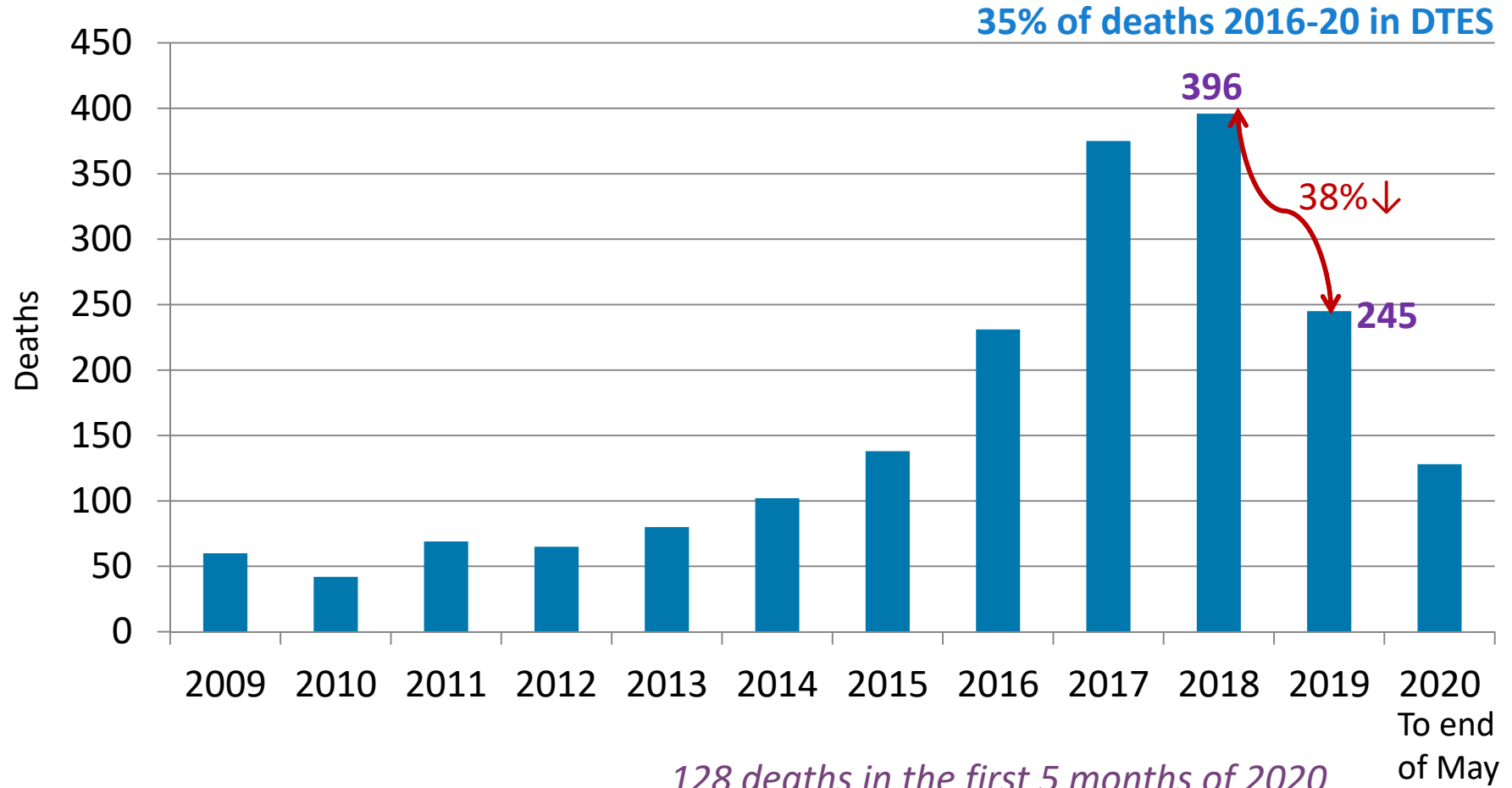
BC Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths (to May 31, 2020)

Figure 1: Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths and Death Rate per 100,000 Population [3,5]



Source: BC Coroners Service

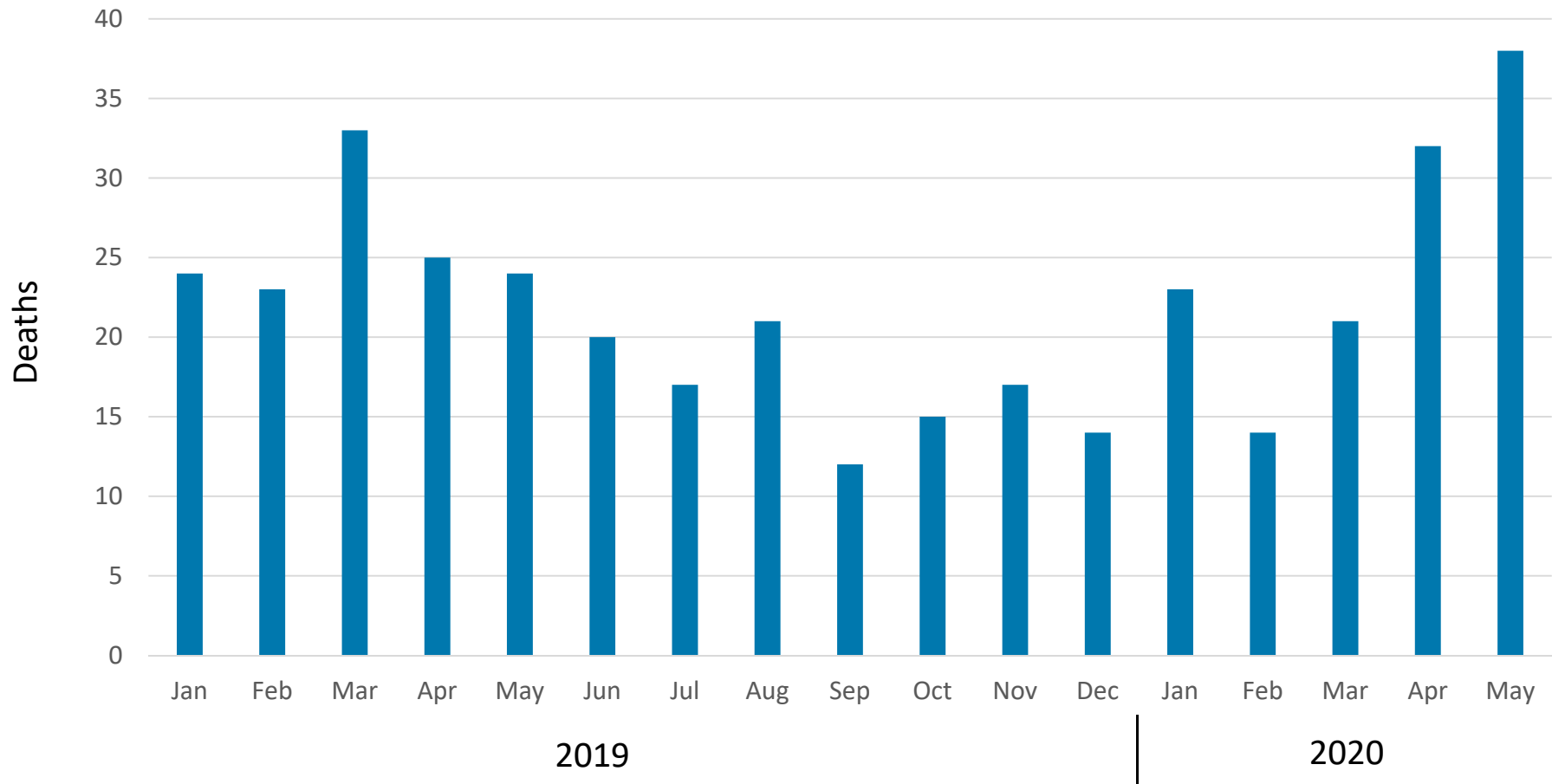
Vancouver Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths 2009 – May 31, 2020



128 deaths in the first 5 months of 2020 compared to 79 in last 5 months of 2019: 62% increase

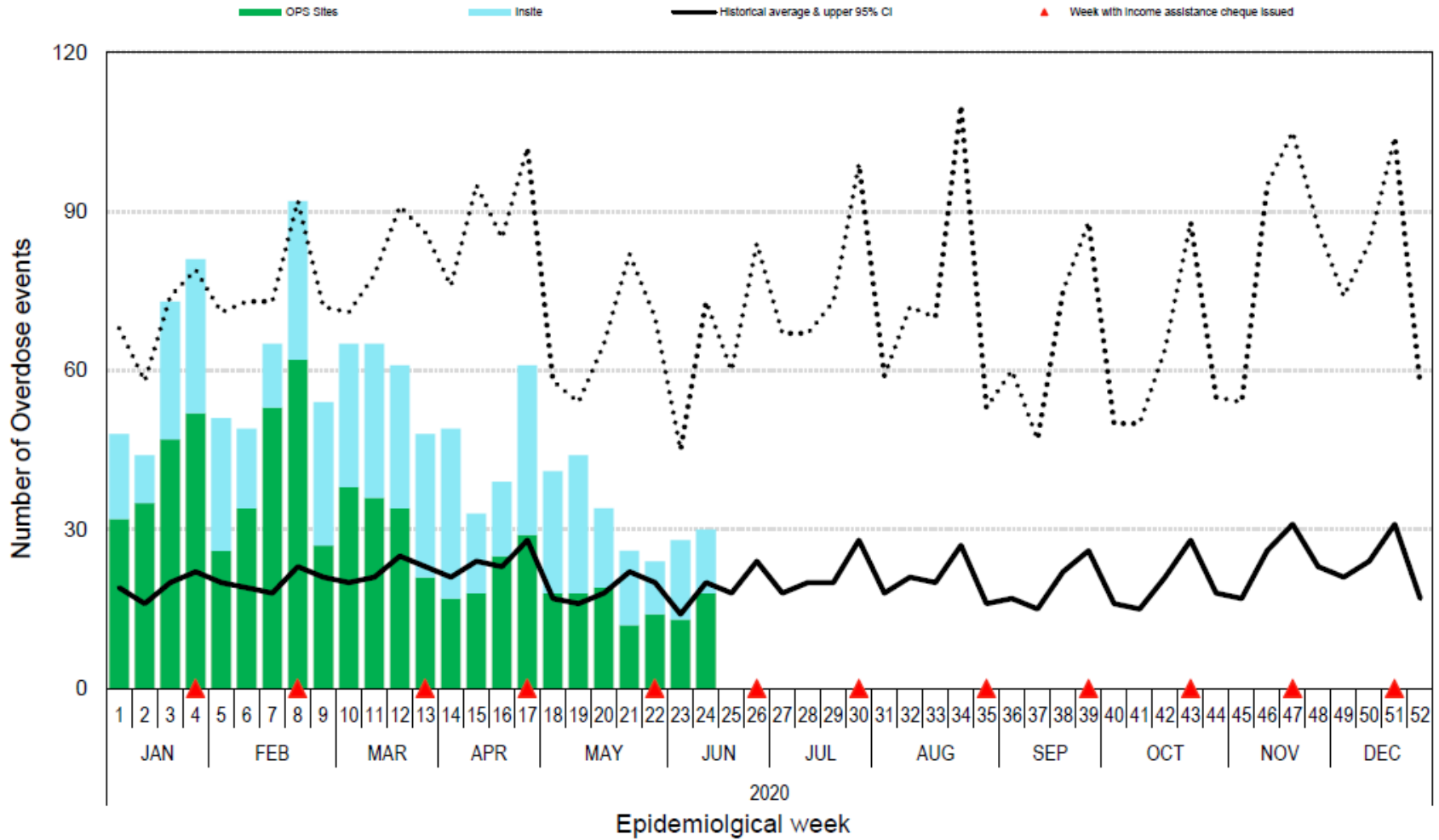
Source: BC Coroners Service

Vancouver Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths January 2019-May 2020



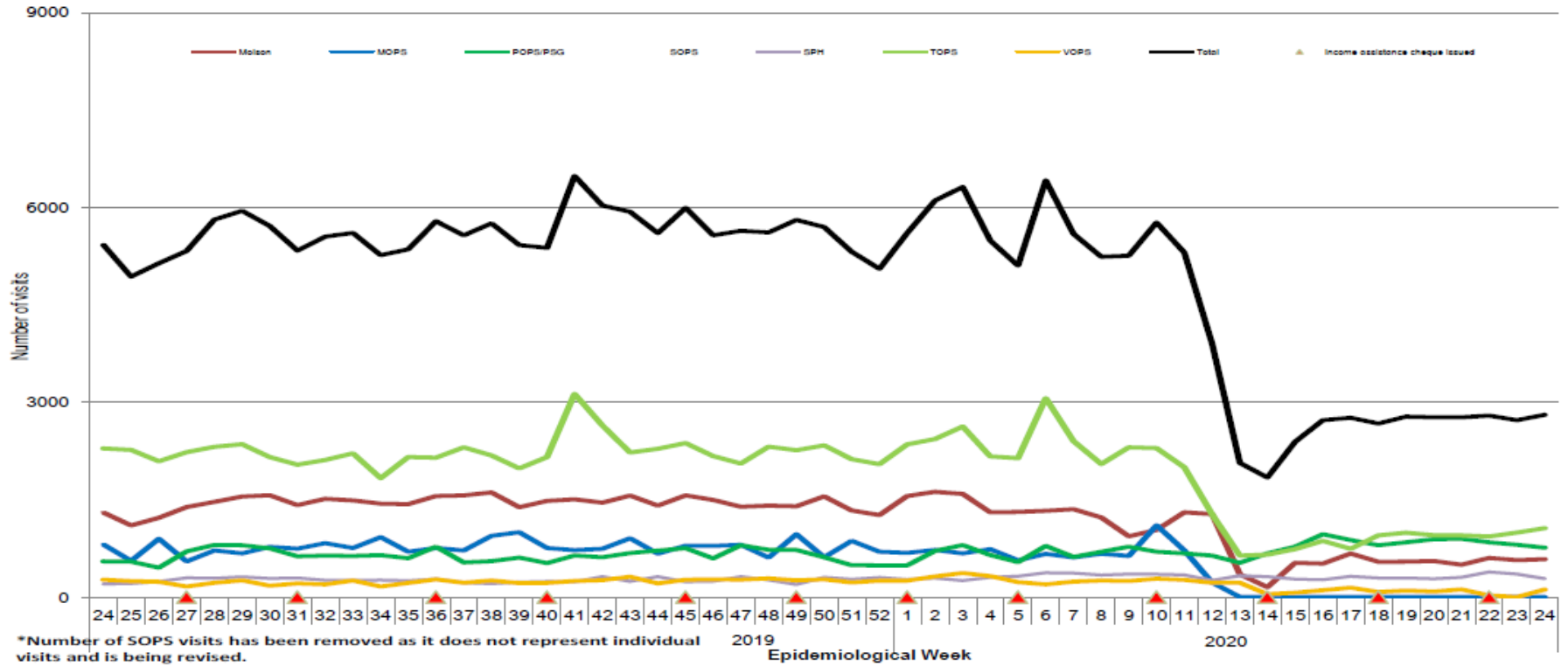
Source: BC Coroners Service

Figure 2. Number of overdose events at Insite and overdose prevention sites* by epidemiological week. Vancouver Coastal Health, 2020 compared to historical average and 95% confidence limits†



Vancouver Coastal Health Overdose Prevention Site Summary

VCH Overdose Prevention Sites Visit Volume by Epidemiological Week and Sites, 2019/2020*



*Number of SOPS visits has been removed as it does not represent individual visits and is being revised.

2019 Epidemiological Week

2020

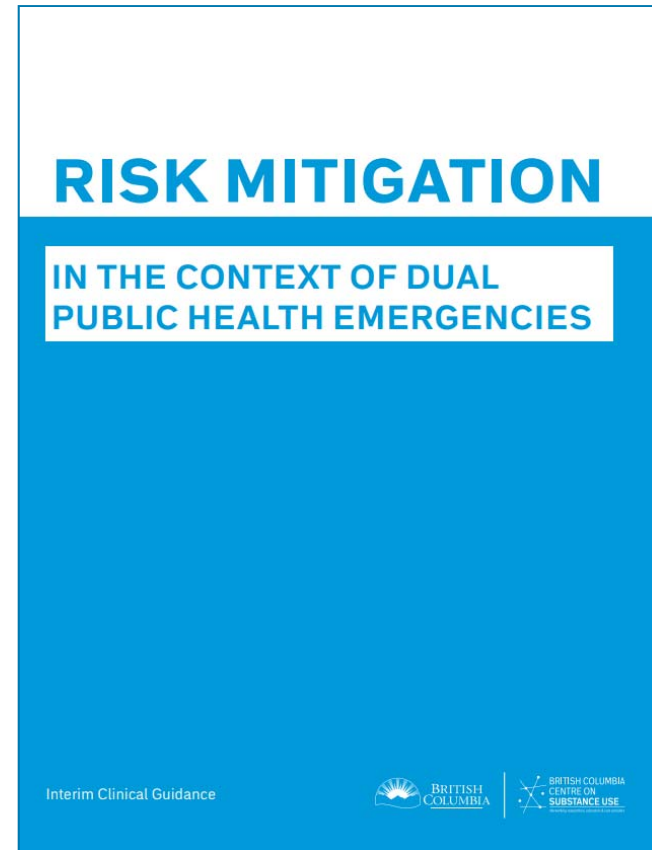


Impact of COVID-19 Public Health Measures

- Overdose Prevention Services shut down or reduced injection spaces
- People afraid to visit because of fear of COVID-19
Result: Fewer people accessing harm reduction services
- Physicians advised to provide care virtually
- Concern about crowding in some addiction clinics
Result: Less access to clinical addiction services

Risk Mitigation Prescriber Guidance ("Safer Supply")

- Guidelines for prescription alternatives for those using illicit substances at risk of COVID-19
- Goal: Prevent withdrawal, support isolation if infected or exposed
- Prescribed to hundreds of people
- Medical model – requires physician prescriber
- Not sufficient to mitigate rise in overdose deaths



Lessons Learned

- COVID-19 public health measures may have contributed to a rise in overdose deaths
- Risk of overdose death *greater* than the risk of severe COVID-19 for residents of the Downtown Eastside
- Future: Maintain full harm reduction and clinical addiction services, even if COVID-19 rates increase

