



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: September 26, 2025
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Meeting Date: October 7, 2025
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture & Community Services

SUBJECT: Urgent Mental Health and Substance Use Service Enhancements Program – 2025 Update

Recommendation

THAT Council receive the Urgent Mental Health and Substance Use Service Enhancements Program – 2025 Update report for information.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report responds to Council's motion, approved November 22, 2022, directing City staff to allocate \$8 million per year to enable the requisition and hiring of mental health nurses. In response to this motion, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) created an *Urgent Mental Health and Substance Use Service Enhancements Program* ("the program") to implement the City's investment in mental health service enhancements. This report provides an update on progress made by VCH in implementing the program to date. Information contained in this report is accurate to July 31, 2025.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

- [2024-11-27](#): Council approved a grant to VCH in an amount up to \$4,150,000 (RTS 16145).
- [2024-02-06](#): Council approved a grant to VCH in an amount up to \$4,670,000 (RTS 16098).
- [2023-02-14](#): Council approved VCH's *Urgent Mental Health and Substance Use Service Enhancements Framework* and a grant to VCH in an amount up to \$2,800,000 (RTS 15510).
- [2022-11-22](#): Council passed a Motion entitled *Enabling the Requisitioning and Hiring of 100 New Police Officers and 100 Mental Health Nurses*.
- *Vancouver Charter* Section 206(1)(a) enables Council to, by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of all its members, provide for the making of money grants to a charitable institution.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendation.

Context and Background

On [November 22, 2022](#), Council approved the motion entitled *Enabling the Requisitioning and Hiring of 100 New Police Officers and 100 Mental Health Nurses* (Member's Motion B.5). This motion directed staff to allocate funding in the 2023 Operating Budget for the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) to hire 100 new police officers and for VCH to fund 100 new nurses. The motion specifically referenced the following VPD and/or VCH mental health response partnerships or teams: (1) Car 87/88 – Mental Health Cars, (2) Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams, (3) Assertive Outreach Team (AOT), and (4) VPD Mental Health Unit.

With the opportunity presented by the Council resolution, VCH identified the need to prioritize specific services for people with more severe mental health issues, some of whom also use substances and are frequently unhoused or living in shelters, single-room occupancy hotels (SROs) or supported housing. Further, given the demonstrated effectiveness of interdisciplinary teams in crisis response programs, VCH proposed that funding be directed to support a range of different types of mental health workers, including nurses, social workers, peers and others – rather than be solely directed to mental health nurses.

In early 2023, VCH presented an approach to allocating the City's funding in their proposed *Urgent Mental Health and Substance Use Service Enhancements Framework*, which recommended the \$8M be allocated to expand existing programs, and initiate new programs, through the hiring of 58 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. These enhancements included:

- Expansion of Car 87/88 program;
- Creation of Mobile Crisis De-Escalation (MoDe) team;
- Creation of the Indigenous Crisis Response Team (ICRT);
- Increasing capacity of Operations Command Centre Liaison Nurse (OCCLN); and,
- Enhancement of other health services including assertive community treatment.

Council approved this program unanimously and approved a 2023 grant of up to \$2.8M to initiate implementation. The partial allocation of the \$8M was recommended noting it would take time for VCH to work with VPD to expand existing partnership programs and to develop and initiate the programs outlined in the framework. Subsequent grants were approved by Council in February 2024 and November 2024 to further advance the implementation of the program in 2024 and 2025.

Discussion

Since Council's approval of this framework, VCH has made significant strides in implementing the program. These include refinements to the staffing model, including implementing an interdisciplinary care team model, as noted in the 2024 Council report.

Given hiring capacity and labor market constraints, VCH has continued to phase in enhanced services. Of the positions funded through the City of Vancouver grant, 41 out of 50 FTE (82%) have been recruited. The revised total of 50 FTE rather than 55 FTE (as reported in 2024), reflects refinements to the operational model for the MoDe service, which have improved overall

clinical coverage as well as service delivery into the evenings and weekends. Program specific recruitment status is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Program Specific Recruitment Status

Program	FTEs Filled	FTEs To be Hired
Mobile Crisis De-escalation (MoDe)	18	9
Car 87/88	10	0
Operations Centre Liaison Nurse (OCCLN)	4	0
Indigenous Crisis Response Team (ICRT)	9	0

City staff continue to assist with implementation, participating in the COV-VCH Urgent MHSU oversight and evaluation committees, and engaging in regular touchpoints. A presentation by VCH to Council on the status of the current program accompanies this report.

Financial Implications

Current year expenditures reported from VCH are summarized in the table below, for the period of January 1, 2025 – June 20, 2025:

Expenditure Category:	2025 Budget:	Year to Date Expense (by program):			Total Expenses YTD:	Remaining 2025 Budget:
		MoDe	Car 87/88 OCCLN	ICRT		
Staff Salaries & Benefits	\$ 6,827,329	\$ 893,527	\$ 855,237	\$ 486,814	\$ 2,235,578	\$ 4,591,751
Community Engagement	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000
Other Expenses	\$ 312,139	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 209,301	\$ 102,838
Total:	\$ 7,159,468	\$ 893,527	\$ 855,237	\$ 486,814	\$ 2,444,879	\$ 4,714,589

Expenditures for the remaining 6.5 months of the year are expected to be incurred at higher rates due to the continued increased staffing to fulfill each program. The grant request for 2026, to come forward in the November 2025 Social Policy Grant Report, will include adjustments to reflect future forecasted expenditures based on hiring projections.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report's recommendation.

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