



REPORT

Fire Department

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: March 11, 2024

From: Erin Williams,
Fire Chief
File:

Item #: 2024-144

Subject: City of New Westminster and Fraser Health Authority Second Responder Program (Post-opioid overdose follow-up program)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council accept and approve this report.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council regarding the Second Responder Program between the City and Fraser Health Authority.

SUMMARY

The City has entered into a Common or Integrated Program Agreement with Fraser Health Authority (FHA) which will commence in March. The program will be renamed to the Second Responder program to align with a similar FHA program. This program will see Fire Department personnel:

- a) Identify people at risk of future toxic drug overdoses,
- b) Phone these people to obtain consent to meet with them, then
- c) Along with FHA staff, meet the individual to provide education, harm reduction materials and/or supporting services.

The program hopes to reduce the risk of future toxic drug overdoses and death and will be evaluated after the first month, third month and then annually.

ANALYSIS

After consultation with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner the City entered into a Common or Integrated Program Agreement with FHA to initiate the Post Opioid Overdose Follow-up Project. (See attachment 1). At FHA's request the program has since been renamed the Second Responder Program. The objective of this pilot project is to have the Fire Department move from a reactive respond and resuscitate function to proactive overdose prevention. It is hoped the program will reduce the risk of future toxic drug overdoses; reduce the risk of death in the event of a toxic drug overdose; and reduce the demand for service from Fire, Police, BC Emergency Health Services, and Emergency Departments.

After resuscitating an individual experiencing a toxic drug overdose, firefighters will ask the individual if they can provide a follow-up phone call in a few days. A firefighter will phone the individual to offer a discrete, respectful and people-centric meeting between the individual, the firefighter and FHA staff. If consent is provided the meeting will be scheduled. At the meeting, FHA staff will offer appropriate education, supports and/or services to reduce the likelihood or harm of a future toxic drug overdose.

To evaluate the program, the Fire department will collect anonymized statistics. No personal stories or personalized information will be used for this. The program will be evaluated after the first and third months of operation and then annually. The evaluation will assess its acceptance by the individuals engaged and the services provided.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

This pilot project is intended to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with the opioid epidemic and reduce the demand for services placed on Fire, Police, the BC Emergency Health Services and Royal Columbian Hospital Emergency Department.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

FHA will provide the Overdose Outreach Team that will offer the education, harm reduction, supports and referrals. No additional funding is required but one existing non-uniformed outreach worker from the Fire Department's Public Safety Division will be utilized four hours per week (\$12,432 annually) to assist with acquiring consent to meet from people who experienced overdoses.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

An interdepartmental team from Legislative Services, CAPD, Fire, the CAO's office and the City Solicitor have collaborated on this project.

OPTIONS

There are two options

- 1) Accept and approve this report.
- 2) Provide staff with alternate direction.

Staff recommend option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Common or Integrated Program Agreement between the City of New Westminster and Fraser Health Authority

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Brad Davie, Deputy Fire Chief

This report was reviewed by:
Erin Williams, Fire Chief

This report was approved by:
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer