public service announcement

island health

NANAIMO WORKING GROUP TO HOST

PUBLIC FORUM ON OVERDOSE CRISIS

Nanaimo and area residents are invited to a public forum on Tuesday November 15 to learn about the opioid overdose crisis, the impact it's having on the community and the work underway to prevent and manage overdoses and support those with opioid dependency who are at risk for an overdose.

"We need to continue to bring the community together to talk about the seriousness of the overdose crisis and how better to respond," said Dr. Paul Hasselback, Island Health's Medical Health Officer for Central Vancouver Island.

Presented by the Nanaimo Overdose Prevention & Management Working Group, the forum runs from 4 pm to 8 pm at the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre. Member agencies of the Working Group will be available to talk with community members and will participate in a presentation and panel discussion starting at 5:15 pm. A question and answer session will follow.

"One of the best ways to prevent youth from getting involved in drug misuse is through education," said Bob Esliger, Assistant Superintendent with Nanaimo-Ladysmith Public Schools. "The school district will utilize prevention teaching materials, programs and presentations in partnership with local agencies to assist in this important work."

Nanaimo has lost 75 community members to overdose in the last four years and the community has one of the highest rates of overdose fatalities in the province. Nanaimo Regional General Hospital's Emergency Department will see about 500 non-fatal drug overdoses this year. Some of this increase is explained by the introduction of illicitly imported fentanyl.

"Community members should understand how to help someone who is at risk of overdosing," said Hasselback. "This forum will raise awareness about overdose risks and what people can do to save themselves and those they care about."

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