

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Second overdose death at Mountain Institution: once again the CSC fail the community

Agassiz, BC, November 2, 2023 — [A second overdose death in seven days](#) has occurred at Mountain Institution on Nov 1, 2023. During their morning rounds Correctional Officers discovered an unresponsive inmate in his cell. First aid was administered but the inmate was pronounced dead by paramedics at 0730.

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers very recently denounced the decision by the Correctional Service of Canada to implement a Prison Needle Exchange Program at Mountain Institution because of the risks for the safety of inmates, staff and the public.

Our hands are tied: a court decision gives inmates the right to access clean needles, but our members believe the solution is not simply providing inmates an injection kit to keep in their cell at the expense of public safety and inmate rehabilitation. A prison needle exchange program would only result in more overdoses.

—Jeff Wilkins, National President of UCCO-SACC-CSN

How many more inmates need to die of overdoses before CSC takes this issue seriously?

Two inmates have very recently died of drug overdoses because they were left to use drugs alone in their cells. This second overdose at Mountain highlights the ineffectiveness of the PNEP program and shows that CSC has no intention of releasing inmates drug-free to the community. The tick-box approach by CSC falls on the backs of the public to continue to battle the opioids and crime wave plaguing our communities.

—John Randle, Pacific Region President of UCCO-SACC-CSN

Neither a solution to the opioid crisis nor a safe access to syringes, PNEP will only add to the death toll. How many more inmates must die before the Correctional Service of Canada realizes that handing out needles to inmates in their cells without supervision only fuels the current crisis?

About UCCO-SACC-CSN

The Union of Canadian Correctional Officers (UCCO-SACC-CSN) represents over 7,300 members, working in Federal institutions across Canada.

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