

ANKORS Mobile Needle Exchange
AGM 19/20 Fiscal

A brief overview of statistics for 19/20 fiscal year indicates a continued increase in distribution of inhalation supplies. The demand for needle exchange supplies has remained stable. Although the total needle count for the exchange has gone up this year this still represents a low number as compared to annual totals from several years ago. This shift has coincided with the increased use of crystal meth we see throughout most of our communities in the West Kootenay Boundary region.

Fiscal 19/20 is the first full year statistics were recorded for meth pipe distribution. A steady increase was noted throughout almost every quarter of the last fiscal year to an annual total of 2479. An additional 463 pipes were made available to service providers. A large increase was noted for crack pipe stems as well as foil kits and bulk foil sheets to service users which almost tripled the total for the previous year. Additional stems and foil distributed to service providers were recorded separately but not included in service user totals.

The Needle Exchange outreach program has continued to operate through these challenging times with the onset of the corona virus pandemic in early spring and continuing to the present now near the end of the 1st quarter. Following guidelines and protocols set by BCCDC and the Ministry of Health, social distancing and the use of PPE's, outreach was able to continue to provide access to services and clean supplies that have in many cases become more difficult to acquire with restrictions placed on hours of service, and difficulty with travel due to the ongoing pandemic. The pandemic has in many ways magnified the barriers that exist between service users and access to these essential services they require. Provision of naloxone, fentanyl strips, training and drug checking remain an important part of the needle exchange program with overdoses expected to rise through the times of the pandemic we are in. A measure of success can be taken in being able to provide these services to folks that need them most in these trying times we face.

The present ANKORS Needle Exchange Coordinator will be retiring from his position of program coordinator and will provide relief and a supportive role for the incoming coordinator who will be assuming the position for ANKORS at the end of May in the first quarter of this year.

