



New FOI Request – Substance Use & Overdose Response Data (Successor to 2025-F-355)

2 messages

Scott Gilbert <scottgilbertvan@gmail.com>Tue, Apr 28, 2026 at 10:48 a.m.

To: VCH Freedom Of Information Office [VCH] <VCHFreedomOfInformationOffice@vch.ca>

To the FOI Office,

I am submitting a narrowed request for records from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2024 (2 fiscal years). To minimize processing time, I am prioritizing existing summary reports over raw data extraction.

A. Withdrawal Management & Detox
Annual operating expenditures for VCH-funded detox programs, broken down by facility.
Existing summary reports on bed occupancy, average wait times and completion rates.
Primary substance reported at admission.

B. Overdose Data
Annual overdoses and deaths within the VCH region, including substance breakdown (specifically non-opioid substances like cocaine/methamphetamine where fentanyl was absent).

C. Harm Reduction & Safer Supply
Annual expenditures for Insite, OPS sites, safe supply initiatives, and Get Your Drugs Tested.
Existing evaluations comparing cost-effectiveness or outcomes of detox vs. harm reduction programs.
Total VCH FTE staff counts for harm reduction vs. detox/outreach.

D. Funding & Governance
High-level documents or briefing notes showing how funding is allocated between detox and harm reduction (e.g., funding formulas).
Fee Waiver Request (Section 75(5))
I request a fee waiver as these records relate to a matter of public interest (Section 75(5)(b)). Given the ongoing public health emergency and toxic drug crisis, the public has a right to understand the balance of investment between harm reduction and recovery services.
If fees are still applicable, please provide a line-item estimate. I am open to further narrowing the request—such as focusing on specific high-volume facilities—to ensure the fee is eliminated or significantly reduced.
Please provide records in electronic format.

Regards,
Scott Gilbert

What changed to lower the cost?
Timeframe: Cut from 5 years to 2 years.
Language: Swapped "all records/data" for "existing summary reports." This prevents them from charging you for hours of manual spreadsheet creation.
The "Cuts": Removed granular items like "records of recruitment methods," "gift card incentives," and "transportation costs," which likely required searching thousands of individual emails and receipts.

On Wed, Nov 19, 2025, 1:40 p.m. VCH Freedom Of Information Office [VCH] <VCHFreedomOfInformationOffice@vch.ca> wrote:

Dear Scott,

We are writing about your request dated **November 12, 2025** for the following request:

Under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), I am requesting access to records and data from Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) for the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2025.

Please provide the information in electronic format (Excel, CSV, or PDF).

A. Withdrawal Management / Detox Services

1. Annual operating expenditures for all VCH-funded withdrawal management and detox programs (directly operated and contracted), broken down by facility and fiscal year.

2. List of all detox facilities and key operational data for each, including: location, number of beds, occupancy, waitlist length, admission/discharge counts, average stay, completion rates.

3. Aggregate client demographics (age, gender, Indigenous identity if recorded, housing status).

4. Unique clients vs repeat admissions by fiscal year.

5. Type of primary substance reported at admission and percentage of total admissions by substance type.

6. Percentage of total detox beds utilized by each primary substance category by fiscal year.

7. Staffing levels (FTEs) by role and total annual wage expenditure.

8. Policies or documents explaining how detox bed counts, funding, and capacity are determined; whether capped or expanded to meet demand.

9. Records describing detox promotion, outreach, or recruitment methods.

10. Reports assessing barriers to detox entry or early discharge.

B. Overdose Data

1. Annual number of overdoses and overdose deaths reported within VCH region (FY2020–FY2025).

2. Breakdown by substance type involved in overdoses and deaths.

3. For cases where fentanyl or other opioids were not detected, please provide the number of overdoses and deaths attributed primarily to cocaine, methamphetamine, benzodiazepines, or other non-opioid substances.

C. Harm Reduction, Overdose Prevention, and Safer Supply

1. Annual expenditures for Insite, OPS sites, safe supply initiatives, Get Your Drugs Tested, needle/pipe distribution, naloxone, outreach teams, and related harm reduction programs.

2. For each OPS: number of booths, substance use distribution, annual visit counts, staffing levels, and costs.

3. Total expenditure comparison between OPS, harm reduction supply programs, detox, and treatment centers for low-income individuals (by year and region).

4. Any evaluation or report comparing cost-effectiveness or outcomes of detox vs harm reduction programs.

5. Estimates of active substance users in VCH or Vancouver, number accessing harm reduction vs detox, and overlap between populations.

6. Records or reports on incentives to attend detox (housing priority, gift cards, etc.).

7. Comparative cost estimates for support to use vs support to not use substances.

8. Total VCH FTE staff by program type (harm reduction, detox, outreach, policy).

9. Annual expenditures on wages, supplies, training, and transportation for substance-use-related operations.

D. Funding and Governance

1. Documents or correspondence showing how funding is allocated among detox, harm reduction, and overdose prevention (e.g., fixed, formula-based, or discretionary).

2. Communications with the BC Ministry of Health or Mental Health & Addictions regarding funding criteria or objectives for these programs.

3. Reports describing how overdose response funding (e.g., fentanyl crisis funding) has influenced detox capacity and staffing.

4. Public communication or outreach expenditures related to substance use and overdose awareness.

Please provide the data in machine-readable (Excel/CSV) or PDF format. If costs exceed standard processing, please advise on a fee estimate. If records are withheld, provide severed copies and cite specific FIPPA sections.

We are providing you with an estimate of fees for VCH to process your request. Our fee estimate is as follows:

Locating and retrieving records: Total 475 hours (no charge for first 3 hours)	472 hours @ \$30 per hour = \$14,160.00
Preparing records for disclosure and handling records: (severing not included)	3 hours @ \$30 per hour = \$90.00
Total Fee Estimate:	\$14,250.00

We have attempted to provide you with an accurate fee estimate. However, when we respond to your request, you will be required to pay the actual cost of responding, whether it is higher or lower than our fee estimate. If we determine that the actual cost is significantly higher than our estimate, we will advise you before proceeding further with your request. If the actual cost is lower, VCH will reimburse you for the difference between your deposit and the actual fees incurred.

We require a **[50% or 100%]** deposit before we will proceed with our response to your request. If you wish to proceed with your request, please send us a **\$14,250.00** deposit in the form of a cheque or money order payable to the "Vancouver Coastal Health Authority". Please send it to [11th Floor, 601 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4C2](#) (for the attention of Freedom of Information Office – File **2025-F-355**)

Under s. 75(5) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, you may ask to be excused from paying all or part of the fees if:

- (a) you cannot afford payment or for any other reason it is fair to excuse payment; or
- (b) the records you are requesting relate to a matter of public interest, including the environment or public health or safety.

If you wish to request a fee waiver, please provide us with detailed reasons, in writing, why (a) or (b) above applies to your request. We will consider your request and will notify you of our decision within 20 working days after receiving your request.

If you wish to discuss narrowing the scope of your request in order to reduce or eliminate fees, please contact us either by email or at the telephone number listed below.

Finally, you should know that the time period for responding to your request does not elapse while we are waiting for your fee deposit or, if applicable, while we are considering your request for a fee waiver. If we do not receive your deposit or request for fee waiver within 30 working days from the date of this email, we will close our file.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Regards,

Martina Gimenez (she/her)

Freedom of Information Advisor

FOI Office: VCHFreedomOfInformationOffice@vch.ca



I acknowledge the homelands of the Indigenous Peoples of this place we now call British Columbia, and honour the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations in which I live and work.

2 attachments

 **image001.gif**
70 B

 **image002.png**
8 KB

Scott Gilbert <scottgilbertvan@gmail.com>
To: foi@vch.ca

Tue, Apr 28, 2026 at 11:10 a.m.

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