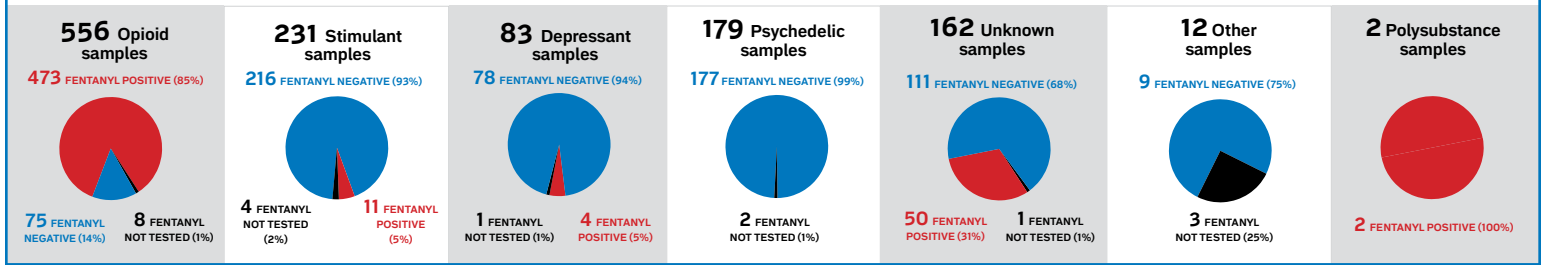




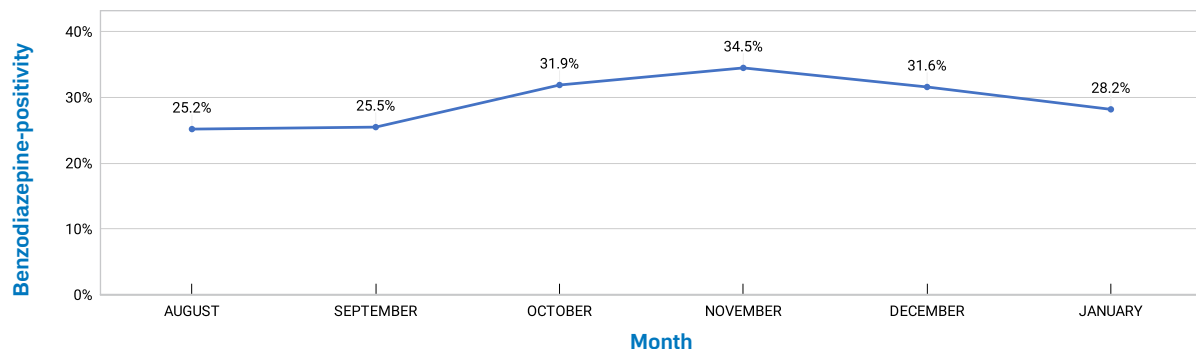
## Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



## PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
January 7 2022 Insite Vancouver	Down Pink pebbles	Caffeine, Erythritol, Fentanyl	Positive	Positive	DTES	Pink pebbles sold as down were linked to overdoses in the neighbourhood.
January 20 2022 Penticton	Down Green pebbles	Caffeine, Erythritol, Fentanyl	Positive	Negative	Penticton	There is an increased risk of drug poisoning with opioids containing higher than normal amounts of fentanyl.
January 20 2022 Kelowna	Down Purple chunks	Caffeine, Mannitol, Fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Kelowna	There is an increased risk of drug poisoning and adverse effects when opioids contain benzodiazepines.

## Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the past 6 months

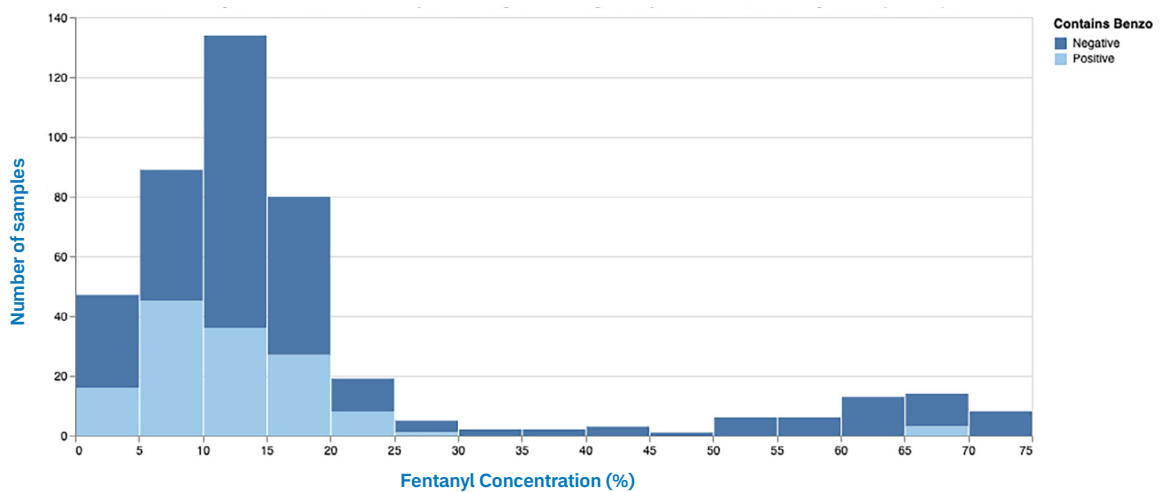


During the month of January, **28.2%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in our partner sites around BC (**144 samples of 511 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here are derived from both of these technologies and are presumptive until confirmed by a laboratory.

## Fentanyl Quantification

The charts below summarize fentanyl concentrations of fentanyl-positive opioid samples brought for drug checking in British Columbia. Fentanyl concentrations were determined using FTIR and a calibrated fentanyl quantification model. Technicians at point-of-care may provide an estimated fentanyl quantification, generally an approximate range of fentanyl percentage in a mixture, but these results were calculated separately (post hoc) using the model for the purpose of this report.

Fentanyl Concentration of Opioid Drug Checking Samples in BC, January 2022



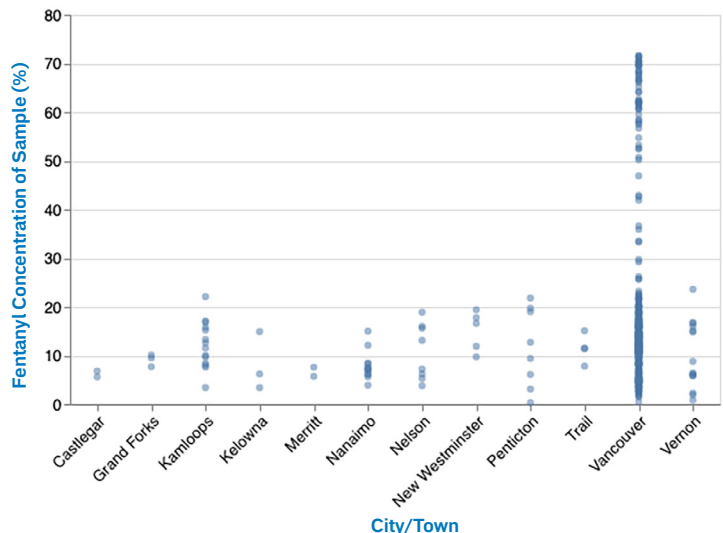
Nearly 3 of 5 of opioids checked (57.3%) have a concentration of fentanyl between 5% and 15%, but nearly 30% of samples are above 15% fentanyl-by-weight, and concentrations can approach 75% of the mixture. The median fentanyl concentration of all samples was 12.7%, up from 12.2% last month. When purchasing fentanyl from an unregulated drug supply, it is often impossible to know what the fentanyl concentration of the drugs is. Drug checking can help, but point-of-care quantification results are provided in a range since it's hard to be precise with the available technologies. For example, a technician might say, "This sample contains caffeine, mannitol, and between 5% and 10% fentanyl."

Drug supplies vary by location in the province. While samples from smaller communities appear to be more consistent, it is important to remember that this is a small number of drugs checked in each city or town. It is also important to note that these locations include only those participating in the BCCSU Drug Checking Project that provide data from FTIR spectroscopy. These numbers may not represent the broader supply or the supply in other settings.

It is very important to remember that the results presented here are fentanyl, not fentanyl analogues like carfentanyl. Carfentanyl is a potent opioid that is often present below the detection limit of the spectrometer and is therefore missed by point-of-care drug checking technologies. Your drug checking technician can explain the limitations in detail when you get your drugs checked, but always take additional harm reduction precautions, like using at an OPS if available, because potent opioids may be presented and go undetected.

If you have any questions about the results, please email us at [drugchecking@bccsu.ubc.ca](mailto:drugchecking@bccsu.ubc.ca).

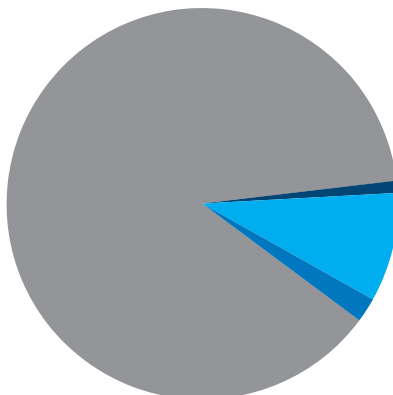
Fentanyl Concentration of Opioid Samples by City/Town, January 2022



## Number of samples tested by region:

Total #: 1,180

1,041: Vancouver Coastal Health region (88%)



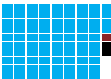
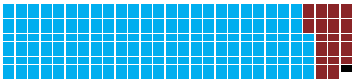
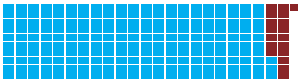

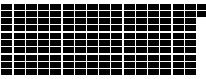
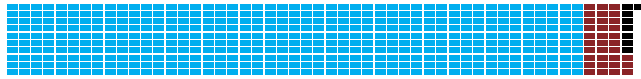

12: Fraser Health region (1%)

112: Interior Health region (9%)

15: Vancouver Island Health Region (2%)

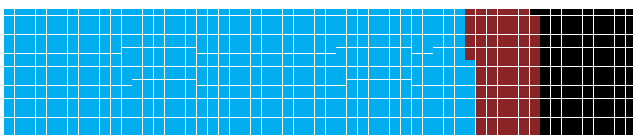
## Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Depressant</b> 83 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 40 Did not match: 1 Match not determined: 2</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Psychedelic</b> 179 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 146 Did not match: 32 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Stimulant</b> 231 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 213 Did not match: 18</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Other</b> 12 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 2 Did not match: 2 Match not determined: 8</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Unknown</b> 162 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Match not determined: 162</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Opioid</b> 511 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 470 Did not match: 33 Match not determined: 8</p>		<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Polysubstance</b> 2 Sample Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 1 Did not match: 1</p>

### Total

1,180 Samples Tested



Matched: 872  
Did not match: 127  
Match not determined: 181

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents

**Depressant may include:**  
benzodiazepines, etizolam,  
GHB, hypnotics

**Opioid may include:**  
"down," heroin, fentanyl,  
pharmaceutical opioids

**Polysubstance includes:**  
cross-category mixtures

**Psychedelic may include:**  
MDMA and related,  
2C-family, tryptamines,  
ketamine, LSD

**Stimulant may include:**  
methamphetamine,  
"speed," cocaine and crack  
cocaine, cathinones

**Unknown includes:**  
samples where the individual  
was unable to identify an  
expected substance - this  
includes found samples.

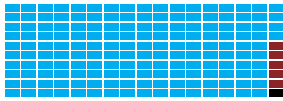
## Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Fentanyl**

170 Samples Tested



Matched: 164

Did not match: 5

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Heroin**

37 Samples Tested



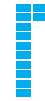
Matched: 24

Did not match: 13

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Opium**

12 Samples Tested



Matched: 12

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Down**

266 Samples Tested



Matched: 254

Did not match: 11

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Pharmaceutical**

23 Samples Tested



Matched: 14

Did not match: 3

Match not determined: 6

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Other Opioid**

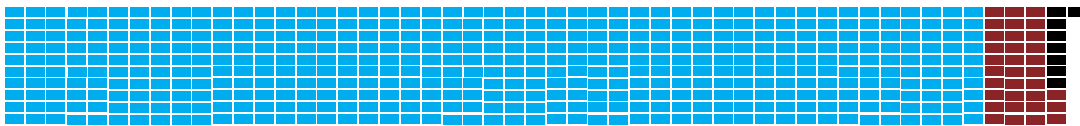
1 Samples Tested



Matched: 1

### Total

511 Samples Tested



Matched: 470

Did not match: 33

Match not determined: 8

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents. 'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Data represented here are collected from our partner sites across the province. Drug samples are tested using the Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometer in combination with fentanyl test strips and benzodiazepine test strips.

There is 5% fentanyl detection limit on the FTIR spectrometer (McCrae, 2019), and a drug check on any given sample consists of both the FTIR and BTNX fentanyl immunoassay test strip testing done in combination. When applicable, BTNX benzodiazepine immunoassay test strips are also used.

BCCSU gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following partners:



Health Canada  
Santé Canada



BRITISH COLUMBIA



Canadian Mental Health Association

