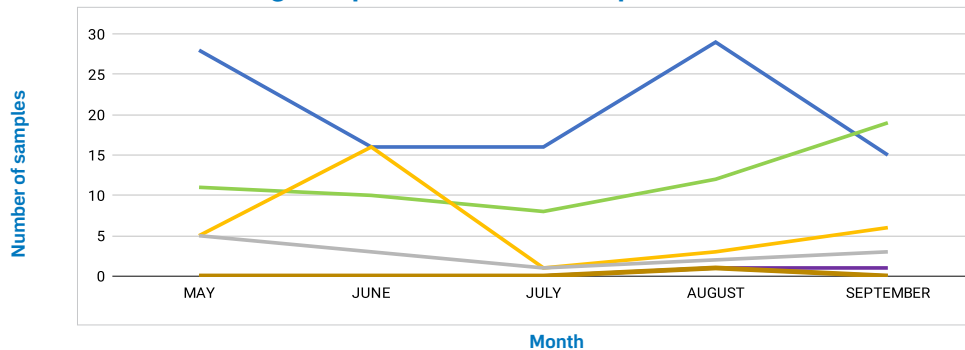


Key Findings

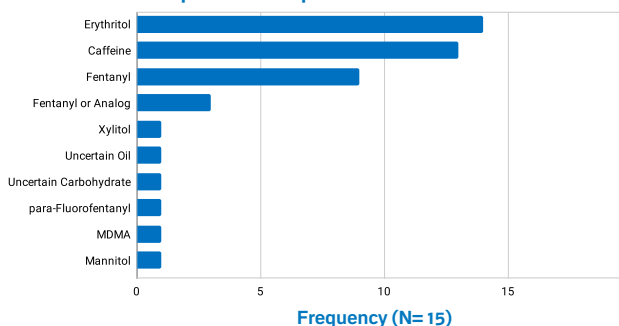
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the region increased from 44.8% to 60.0% in September (9 of 15 samples). Trends may be hard to infer due to the small number of samples over a large region. The true rate may be higher than reported here because benzodiazepines, and benzodiazepine-like substances like etizolam, may be missed by drug checking technologies.
- More stimulants were tested in September than opioids, a reversal of the typical trend of opioids being the most commonly tested substance. Stimulants tested were predominantly cocaine (12 of 19), but also included crack cocaine (1) and methamphetamine (6).
- Drug checking services with FTIR and test strips are now available in the Northern Health Region. Services are available at POUNDS in Prince George and the Northwest Intensive Case Management Team (ICMT) location in Terrace. For updated times and locations, please visit the [Northern Health website](#).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 5 months

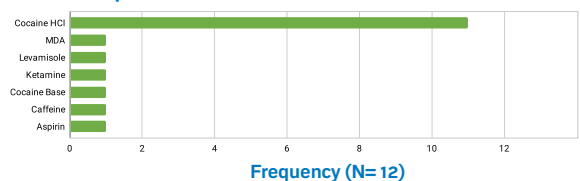


Components found in drug samples in September

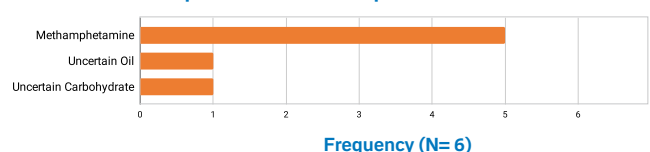
Components in opioids



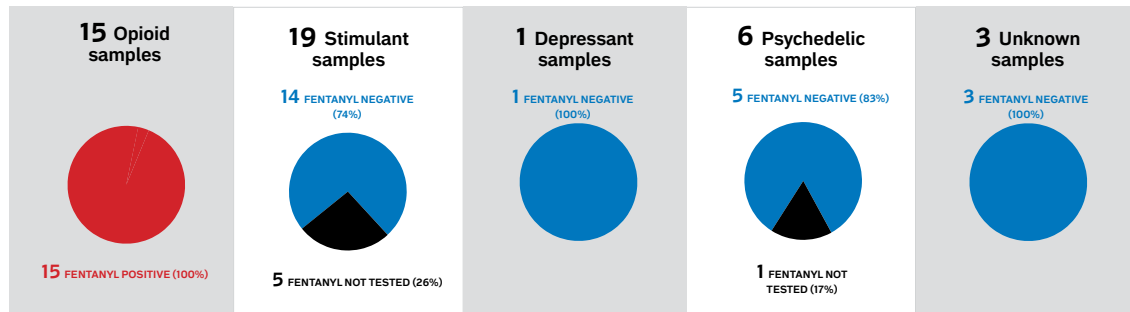
Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



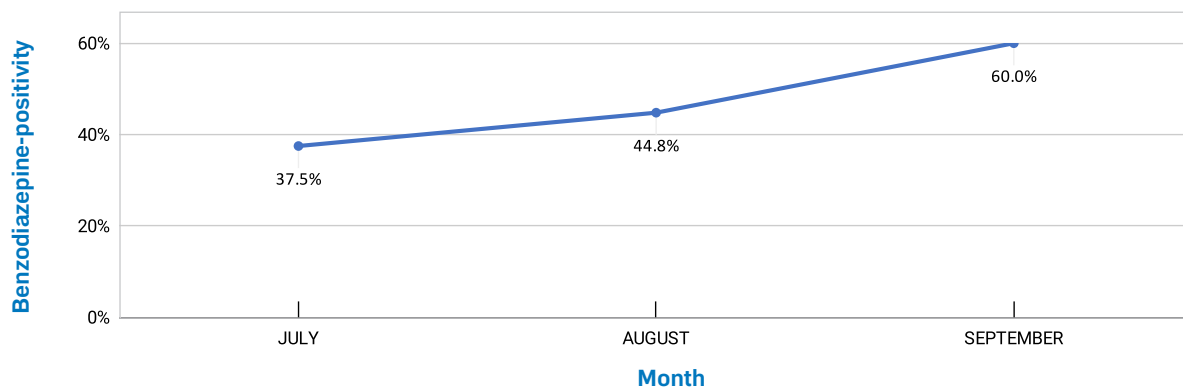
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
No alerts from Northern Health partners this month					

Number of drugs checks at each site

Location	# of drug checks
POUNDS (Prince George)	35
POUNDS (Overdose Awareness Day)	3
Northwest ICMT (Terrace)	6

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the past 3 months



During the month of September, **60.0%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in our partner sites around BC (**9 samples of 15 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.

of samples that matched client expectation using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Opioid

15 Samples Tested



Matched: 15

EXPECTED DRUG:

Stimulant

19 Samples Tested



Matched: 18

Did Not Match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Depressant

1 Samples Tested



Did Not Match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Psychedelic

6 Samples Tested



Matched: 4

Did Not Match: 2

EXPECTED DRUG:

Unknown

3 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 3

Total

44 Samples Tested



Matched: 37

Did Not Match: 4

Match not determined: 3

Number of opioid samples that matched client expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Down

15 Samples Tested



Matched: 15

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

Depressant September include: benzodiazepines, etizolam, GHB, hypnotics

Opioid September include: "down," heroin, fentanyl, pharmaceutical opioids

Polysubstance includes: cross-category mixtures

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

Stimulant September 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.

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:

