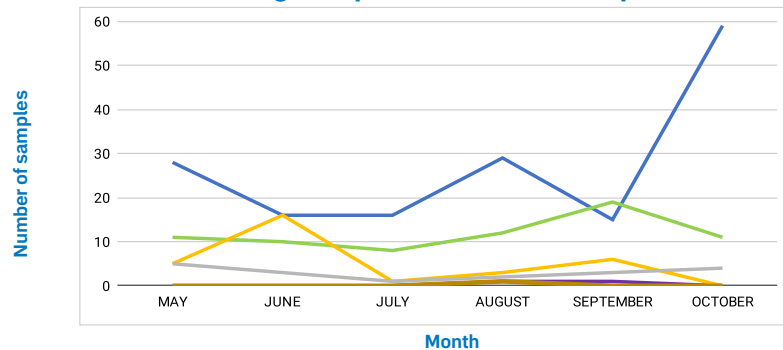


Key Findings

- In October, a total of 74 drug checks were performed in Northern Health, the most ever observed in one month within the region to date. The increases in samples tested predominantly occurred in the opioid category.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the region decreased from 60.0% to 35.6% in October (21 of 59 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.
- 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 6 months



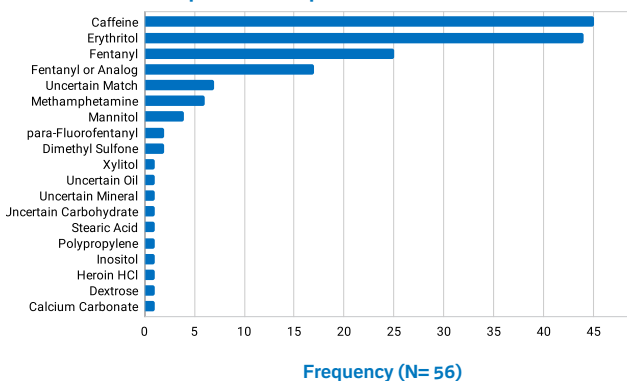
Number of samples by drug category in October

Opioid	59
Stimulant	11
Depressant	0
Psychedelic	0
Other	0
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	4

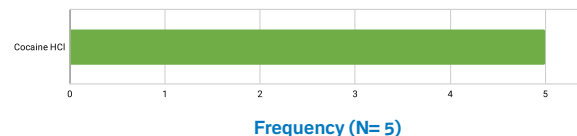
TOTAL: 74

Components found in drug samples in October

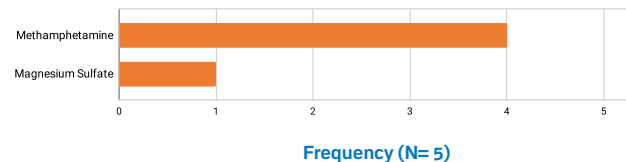
Components in opioids



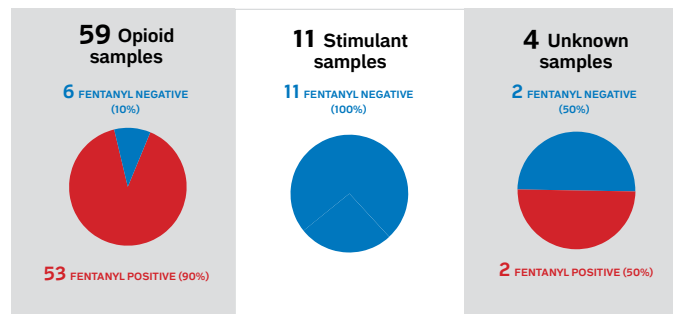
Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



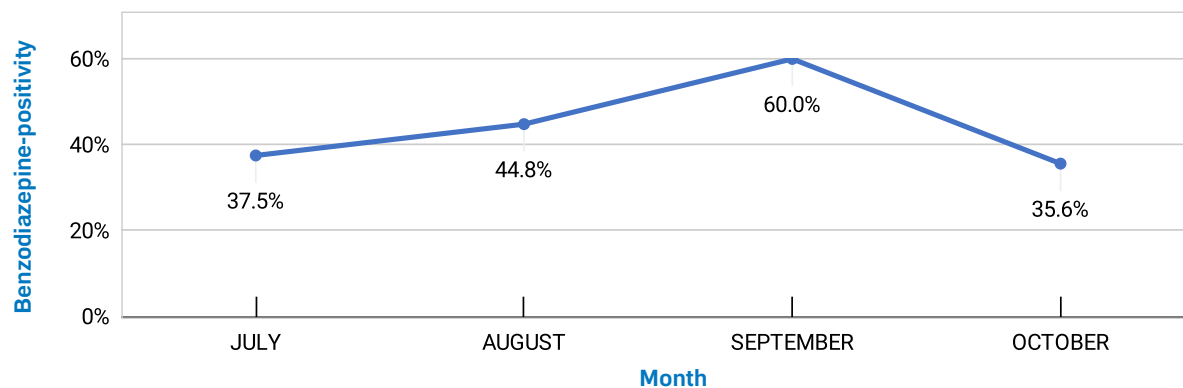
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
October 14 2022 Prince George	Down/Fentanyl	Fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Prince George	High concentration of fentanyl in down with benzodiazepines increases risk of heavy sedation and overdose.
Health authorities and community organizations issue further toxic drug alerts from sources other than drug checking. See their respective websites or social media accounts for more alerts.						

Number of drugs checks at each site

Location	# of drug checks
POUNDS (Prince George)	64
Northwest ICMT (Terrace)	10
TOTAL	74

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the past 4 months



During the month of October, **35.6%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Northern Health (**21 samples of 59 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

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Opioid 59 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 49 Did Not Match: 9 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Stimulant 11 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 10 Did Not Match: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Unknown 4 Samples Tested</p> <p>Match not determined: 4</p>
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Total

74 Samples Tested



Matched: 59
Did Not Match: 10
Match not determined: 5

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

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Fentanyl 1 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Heroin 3 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 1 Did Not Match: 2</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Down 52 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 47 Did Not Match: 5</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Pharmaceutical 3 Samples Tested</p> <p>Did Not Match: 2 Match not determined: 1</p>
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Total

59 Samples Tested



Matched: 49
Did Not Match: 9
Match not determined: 1

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

Depressant include:
benzodiazepines, etizolam,
GHB, hypnotics

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

Polysubstance includes:
cross-category mixtures

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

Stimulant 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:

