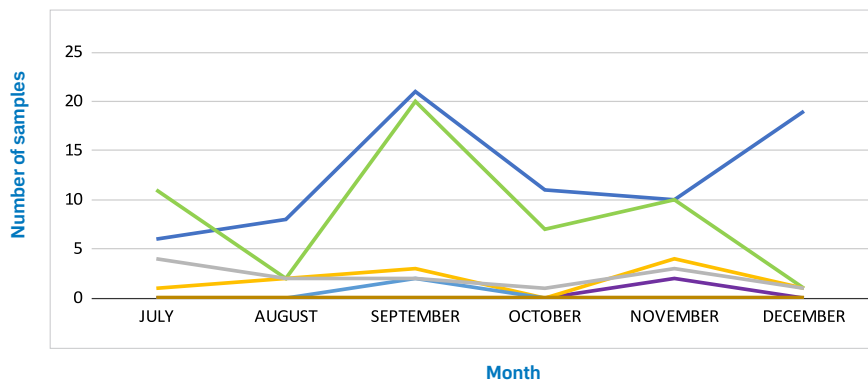


Key Findings

- In December, a total of 22 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Northern Health region.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and test strip increased from 40.0% to 73.7% in December (14 of 19 samples).
- Bromazolam, a benzodiazepine, was found in concentrations high enough to be detected by FTIR in 26.3% of unregulated opioids (5 of 19 samples).
- Fluorofentanyl was detected by FTIR in 21.1% of unregulated opioids (4 of 19 samples), whereas fentanyl was detected in 52.6% (10 samples).
- Xylazine was detected by FTIR in 5.3% of unregulated opioid samples (1 of 19 samples).
- Trends are hard to infer due to the small number of samples over a large region.
- Drug checking services with FTIR and test strips are now available in the Northern Health Region. For updated times and locations, please visit the [Northern Health website](#).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



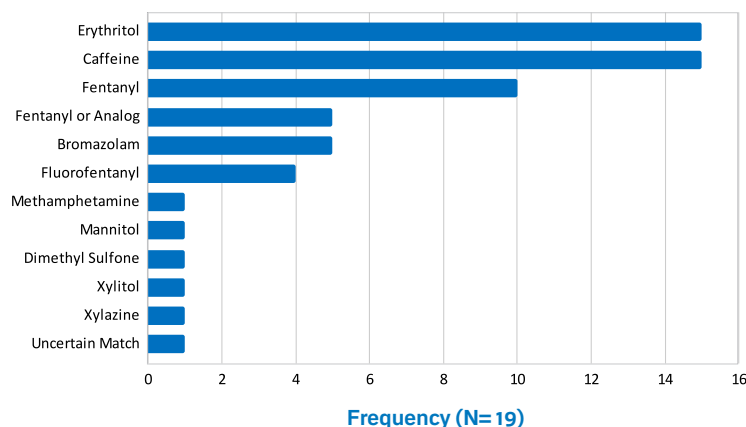
Number of samples by drug category in December

Opioid	19
Stimulant	1
Depressant	0
Psychedelic	1
Other	0
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	1

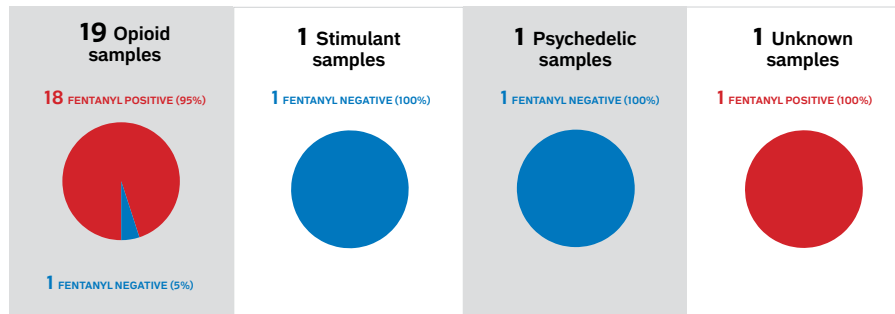
TOTAL: 22

Components found in drug samples in December

Components in unregulated opioids



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



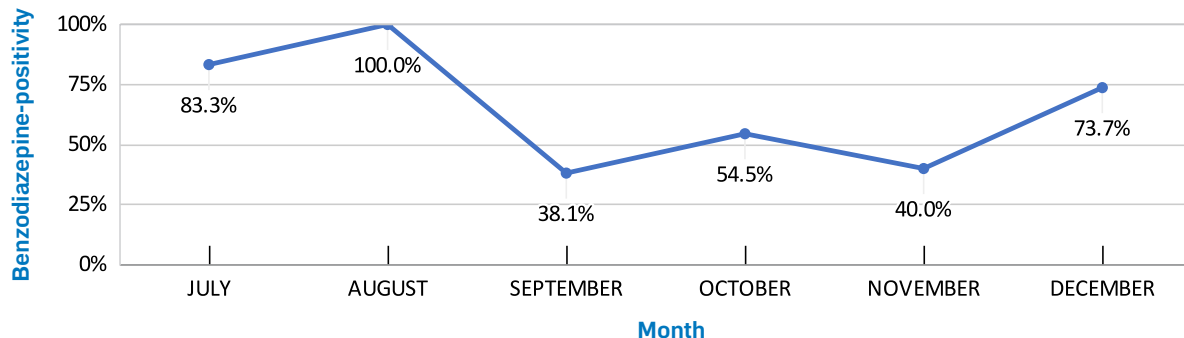
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
No alerts for Northern Health this month.						

Number of drugs checks at each site

Location	# of drug checks
POUNDS (Prince George)	22

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



During the month of December, **73.7%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Northern Health (**14 samples of 19 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	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	18	1	0	19
Stimulant	1	0	0	1
Psychedelic	1	0	0	1
Unknown	0	0	1	1
Total	20	1	1	22

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

EXPECTED DRUG	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Down	18	1	0	19

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
(unregulated opioids), and
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:

