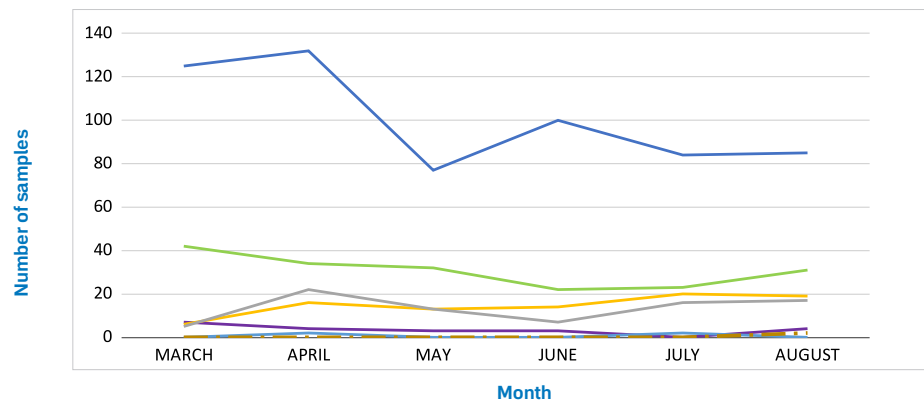


## Key Findings

- In August, a total of 158 drug checks were performed by the CMHA Mid-Island Albert Street site in Nanaimo, which included drug checking services provided at Sunfest Music Festival (2 access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip decreased to 68.2% (58 of 85 samples). The true rate may be higher as benzo-like substances such as etizolam are not reliably detected by benzodiazepine test strips.
- Benzodiazepines were detected by FTIR in 15.9% of unregulated opioids (13 of 83 samples), indicating their presence in higher concentrations.
- Fluorofentanyl was most common fentanyl analog detected in August (29.3%; 24 of 82 samples), surpassing fentanyl for the first time (24.4%; 20 samples).
- Xylazine was detected by FTIR in 6.1% of unregulated opioids (5 of 82 samples).
- Drug checking services are now operating 7 days a week from 11:00am–8:30pm at 250 Albert Street, Nanaimo. Samples can also be dropped off any day of the week and results can be picked up during drug checking hours. To find a drug checking service near you, please see our [site locator](#).
- Substance (The Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project), offers drug checking in Victoria and communities across the Island. For more information about drug checking sample results in the Island health region, please visit [www.substance.uvic.ca](http://www.substance.uvic.ca).

## Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



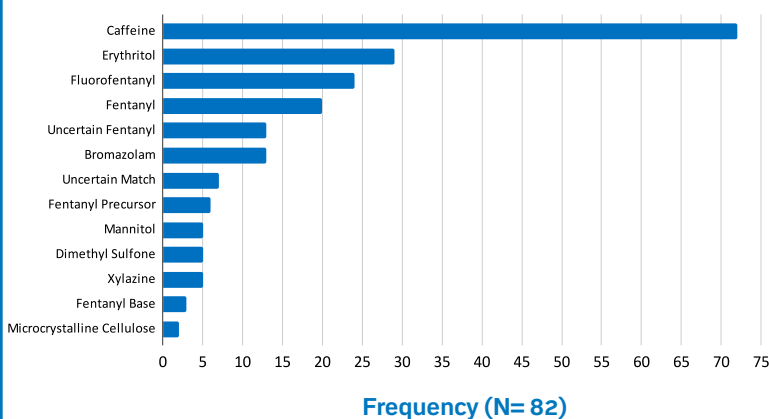
Number of samples by drug category in August

Opioid	85
Stimulant	31
Depressant	4
Psychedelic	19
Other	0
Polysubstance	2
Unknown	17

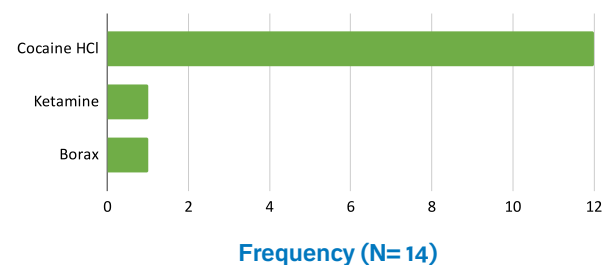
**TOTAL: 158**

## Components found in drug samples in August

### Components in unregulated opioids

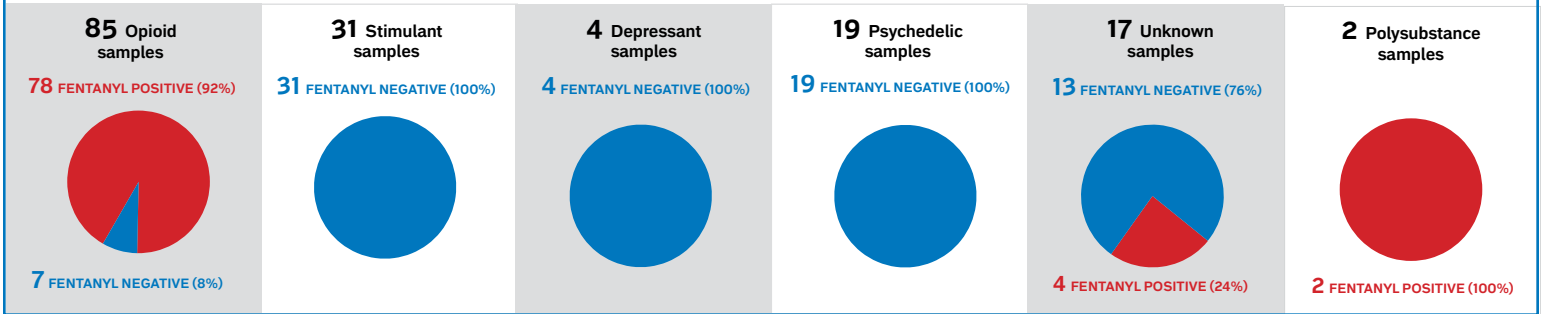


### Components in cocaine



Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: 6-MAM, cocaine base, heroin HCl, methamphetamine, sorbitol, xylitol.

## Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

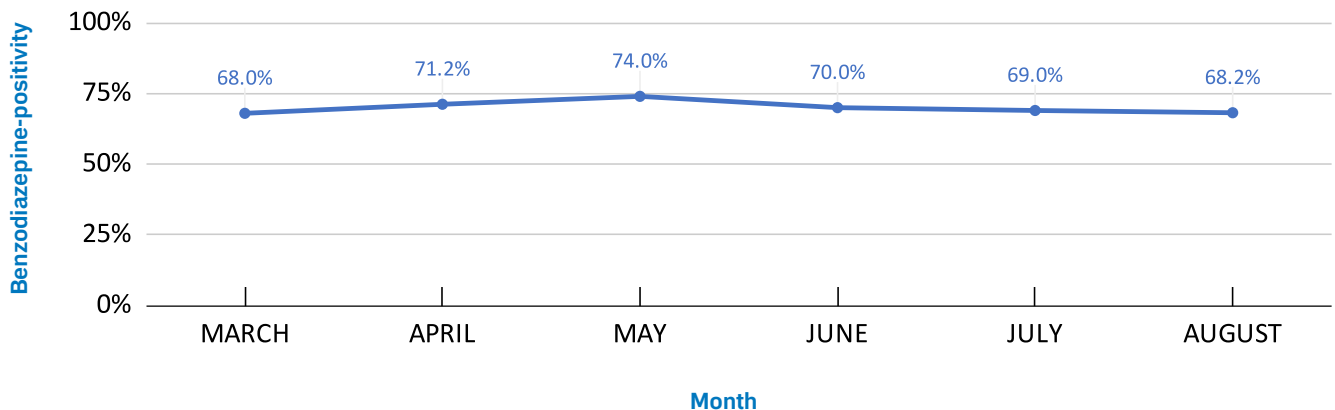


## PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
No alerts from drugs checked at Albert St. Drug Checking service this month					

To subscribe to the provincial drug alert and response system, text the word JOIN to 253787 (ALERTS).

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



During the month of August, **68.2%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Island Health (**58 samples of 85 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.

## Number of drugs checks at each site:

Location	# of Drug Checks
Albert St. OPS (CMHA Nanaimo)	145
Albert St. OPS (Lake Cowichan)	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>

## Number of samples with expected drug present

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Present	Not Present	Presence Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	78	6	1	85
Stimulant	28	3	0	31
Psychedelic	19	0	0	19
Depressant	3	1	0	4
Polysubstance	2	0	0	2
Unknown	0	0	17	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>158</b>

## Number of opioid samples with expected drug present

\*using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Present	Not Present	Presence Not Determined	Samples Tested
Fentanyl	24	1	0	25
Down	54	3	0	57
Pharmaceutical	0	1	1	2
Opium	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>85</b>

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: