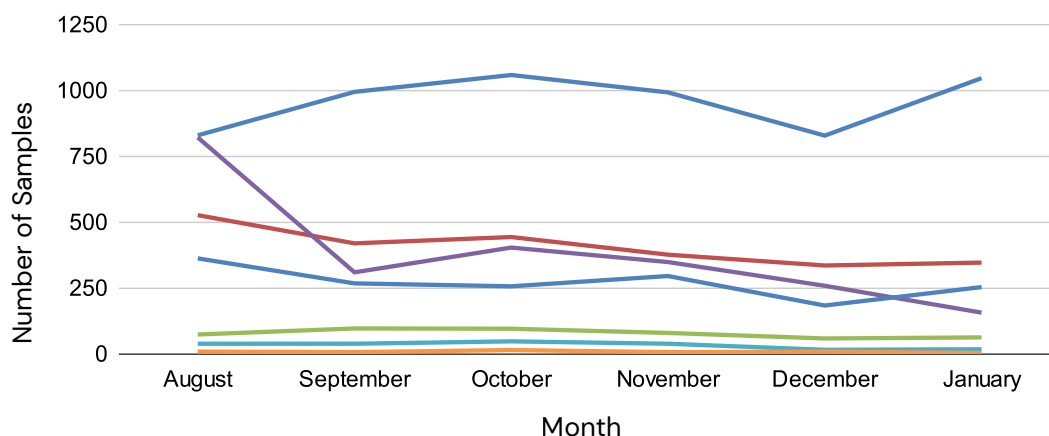




### Key findings

- In January, **1,883** drug checks were performed by community drug checking sites in BC (**58 access points**). The decrease in total drug checks from previous months is a result of the closure of a high-volume site in the VCH region in December 2025.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip decreased to **42.7%**. Of these, desalkylgidazepam remained the most common benzodiazepine identified by FTIR.
- Novel benzodiazepines continue to be detected in unregulated opioids, which included clobromazolam, ethylbromazolam, nifoxipam, and ethylflualprazolam in January. We note that ethylflualprazolam may not reliably be detected by test strip.
- The overall median concentration of unregulated opioids containing fentanyl and/or fluorofentanyl decreased to **9.4%**, continuing a downward trend since September ([see page 3](#)).
- There has been an increase in medetomidine in the unregulated drug supply, coinciding with an uptick in drug alerts issued in January. Out of the total **12 alerts**, **4** were related to medetomidine, including a province-wide alert issued by the BCCDC. Of the remaining alerts, **5** were related to increased drug poisoning events.
- Among opioid samples sent for secondary testing in January (**n=222**), medetomidine was detected in **109 samples**, carfentanil in **14 samples**, and xylazine in **2 samples**.

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



### Number of samples by drug category in Jan.

● Opioid	1046
● Stimulant	346
● Depressant	62
● Psychedelic	156
● Other	17
● Polysubstance	3
● Unknown	253

**Total: 1,883**

### Number of samples tested by region

Vancouver Coastal Health region: 671 (**36%**)

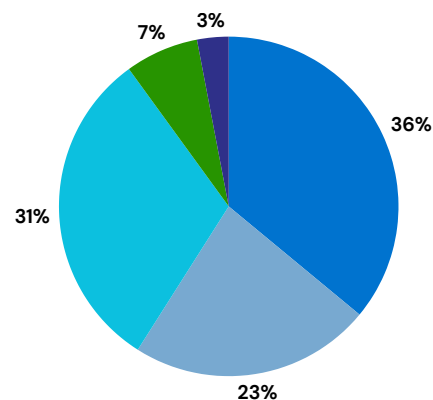
Fraser Health region: 441 (**23%**)

Interior Health region: 588 (**31%**)

Island Health region: 118 (**7%**)

Northern Health region: 65 (**3%**)

**Total: 1,883**



### Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	987	49	10	1046
Stimulant	330	16	0	346
Depressant	23	39	0	62
Psychedelic	143	11	2	156
Other	13	3	1	17
Polysubstance	3	0	0	3
Unknown	0	0	253	253
<b>Total</b>	<b>1499</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>1883</b>

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

## Opioids

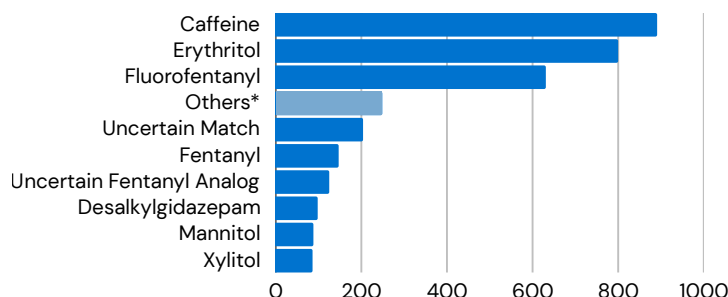
### Number of opioid samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	39	8	1	48
Heroin	10	14	0	24
Other Opioid	1	1	1	3
Down	896	17	2	915
Pharmaceutical	32	8	6	46
Opium	9	1	0	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1046</b>

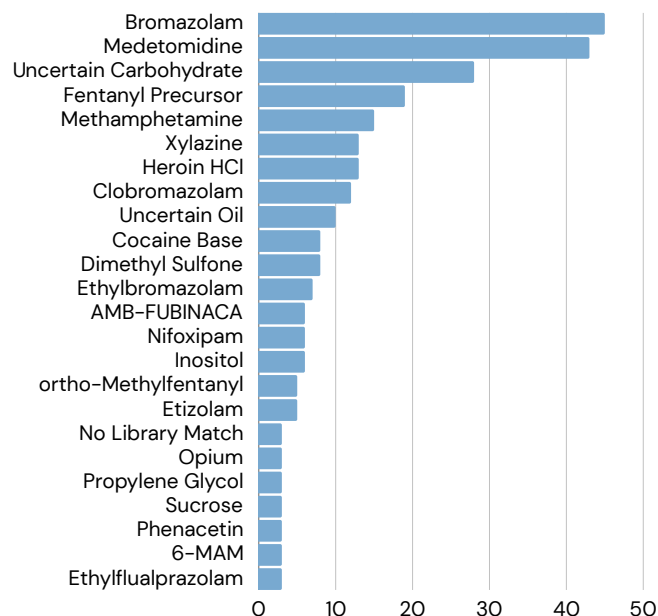
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents. 'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

### Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=987)

#### Main components



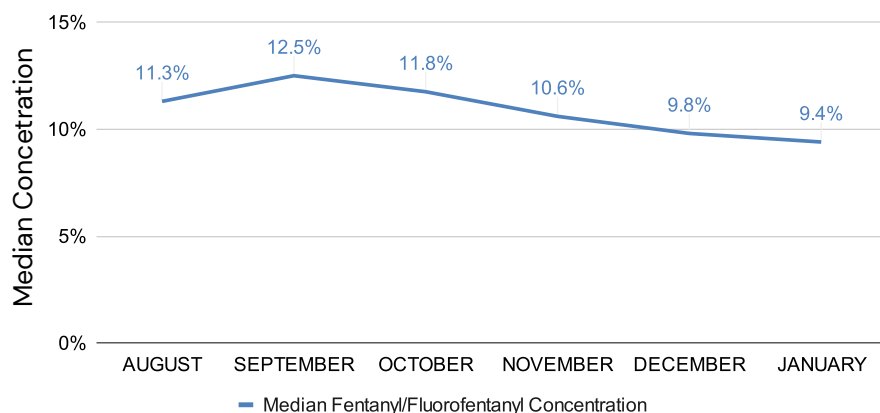
#### Other components



Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

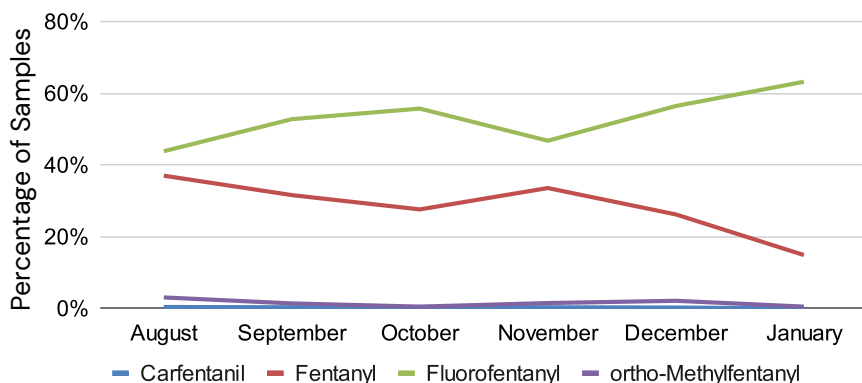
### Median fentanyl concentration of unregulated opioids, past 6 months

Concentrations were estimated using a validated quantification model for the purposes of this report with aggregated data. To learn more about the QUANT3 quantification model visit [here](#).



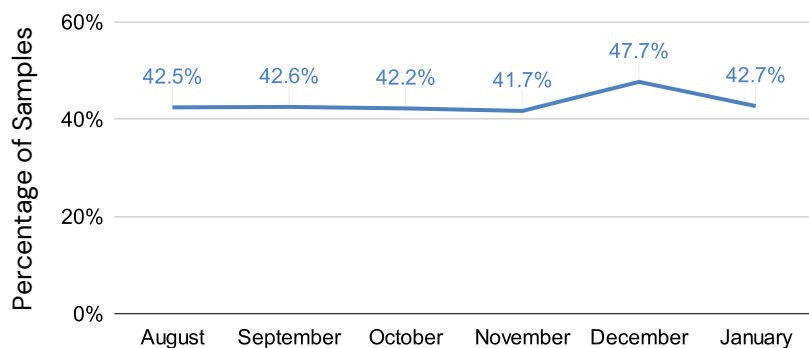
- Fentanyl and fluorofentanyl are the predominate fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, and are considered to have similar potency. They are combined here to show their overall median concentration over the past 6 months. In January, the overall median concentration of fentanyl and/or fluorofentanyl decreased to **9.4% (n=945)**, continuing a downward trend since September.
- Most unregulated opioids contain fentanyl and/or fluorofentanyl at concentrations between 5% and 15%, but samples can range from containing trace amounts to comprising most of the mixture.

### Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



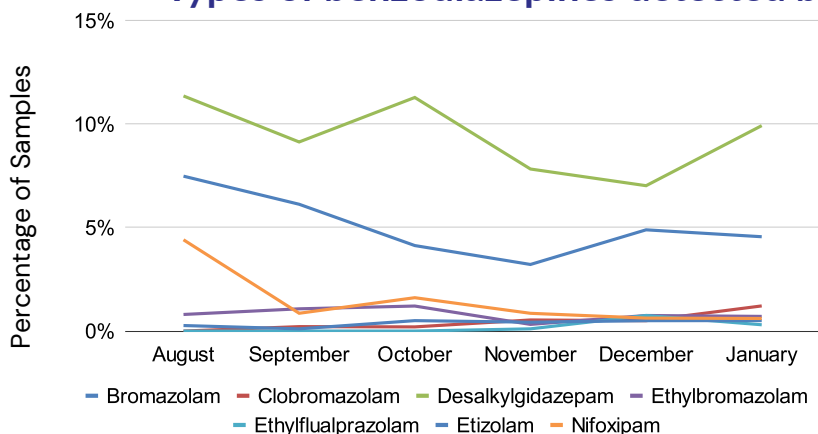
- Fluorofentanyl continues to be the most common fentanyl analog detected in unregulated opioids. In January, fluorofentanyl was detected in **63.2%** of samples by FTIR (**631 of 987 checked**), the highest level of detection to-date.
- Conversely, fentanyl was detected by FTIR in **14.9%** of opioids, the lowest level to-date (147 samples). This may indicate that less fentanyl is circulating in the opioid supply, and/or that it is present in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%).
- Carfentanil was not detected by FTIR this month, but continues to be found in samples sent for secondary testing. Please see the Secondary Testing section of this report for more information.

### Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months



- During the month of January, **42.7%** of all expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines (**447 samples of 1046 checked**).
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The true number may be higher, as some benzodiazepines may be missed by test strip.

### Types of benzodiazepines detected by FTIR, past 6 months

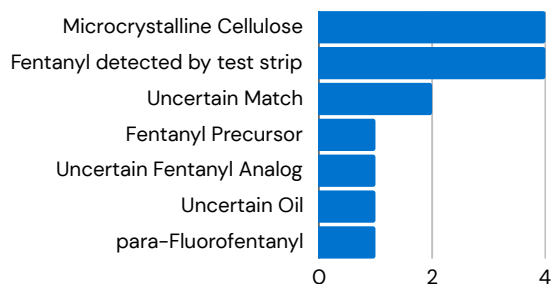


- In January, **17.5%** of unregulated opioids (**173 of 987 samples**) contained benzodiazepines in concentrations high enough to be detectable by FTIR (>5%).
- Desalkylgidazepam remained the most common, with detection increasing to **9.9%** of unregulated opioids tested (**98 samples**).
- We are continuing to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines. In January, this included clobromazolam (**12 samples**), ethylbromazolam (**7 samples**), nifoxipam (**6 samples**), and ethylflualprazolam (**3 samples**). We note that ethylflualprazolam may not reliably be detected by test strip.

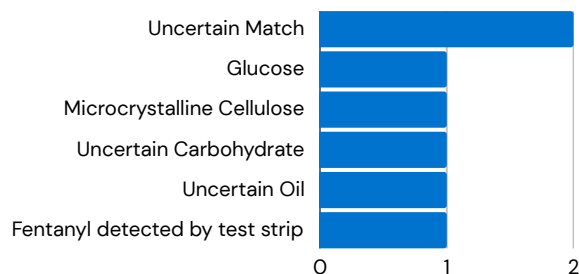
### Components detected in pharmaceutical opioids

(where expected drug was not detected)

#### Hydromorphone (N=4)



#### Oxycodone (N=2)

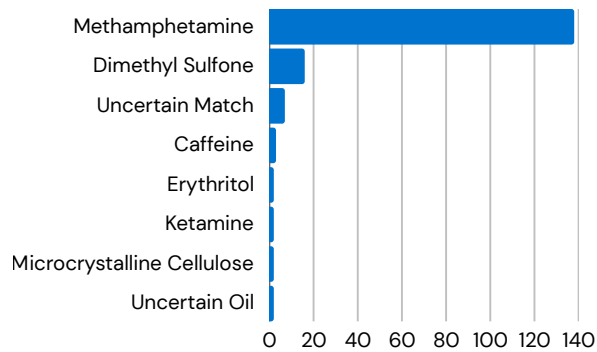


- In January, a total of **46 samples** were submitted as pharmaceutical opioids. Of these, hydromorphone (Dilaudid) (**n=17**), oxycodone (OxyContin) (**n=15**) were the most frequently submitted.
- Among samples expected to be hydromorphone and oxycodone, 6 were determined to be counterfeit as they did not contain the expected drugs and instead contained unexpected active ingredients.
- Of these, the most common unexpected active ingredients detected were fentanyl/analogs, as determined by test strip/FTIR.

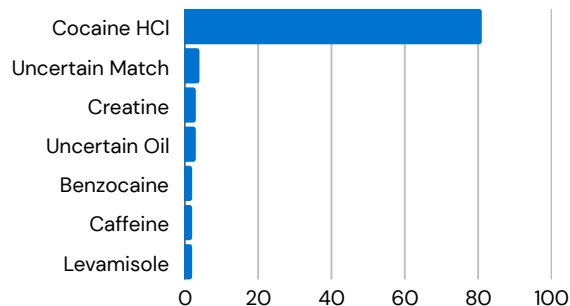
## Non-Opioids

### Components detected in stimulants

#### Components in methamphetamine (N=142)

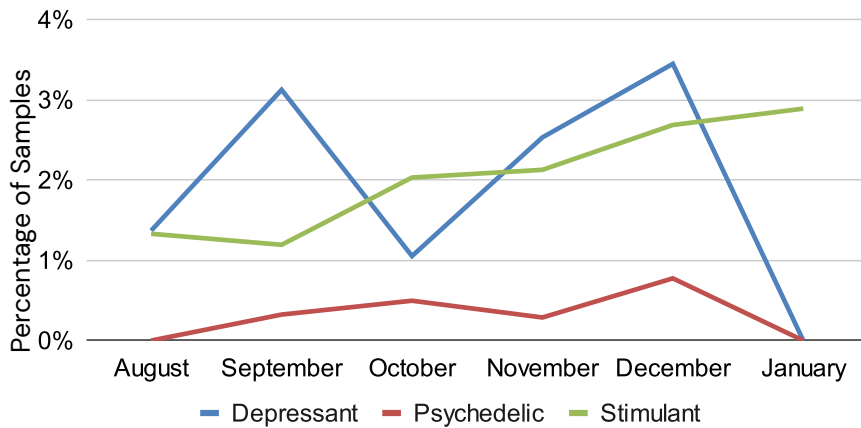


#### Components in cocaine (N=83)



Additional components detected a single time of samples have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on our [dashboard](#)

### Fentanyl detected in non-opioids, past 6 months



- In January, a total of **10 stimulant samples** tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR and/or test strip.
- Of these, **2 samples (20.0%)** were expected to be cross-contaminated by the service user, noting they had been stored with opioids, or stored with opioids prior to submitting the samples for drug checking for drug checking.

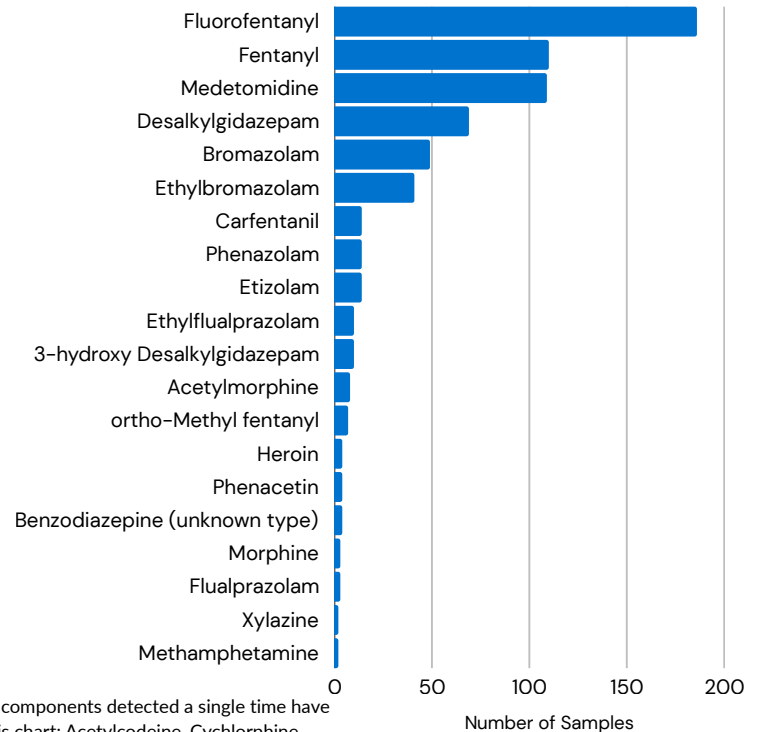
### PSMS Secondary Testing Results Summary

A subset of samples were sent for secondary testing provided by Substance at the University of Victoria, using Paper-Spray Mass Spectrometry (PSMS). PSMS is a highly sensitive technology, and can detect components in samples below the detection limit of the FTIR (<5%). Below is a summary of all active components detected in opioid samples sent in confirmatory testing. For more information about Substance please visit their [website](#).

#### Total opioids sent to Substance

Health Authority	Number of Samples
Fraser Health	103
Interior Health	48
Northern Health	48
Island Health	19
Vancouver Coastal Health	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>

#### Active components detected (n=222)



To save space, additional components detected a single time have been omitted from this chart: Acetylcodeine, Cychlorphine, Fluorofentanyl Base, Fentanyl or analogue, Fentanyl analogue (unknown type), Codeine, Lidocaine, Bromazepam.

### Public Health Notifications

There has been an increase in medetomidine in the unregulated drug supply, coinciding with an uptick in alerts issued in January. Out of the total 12 alerts, 4 were related to medetomidine, including a province-wide alert issued by the BCCDC. Of the remaining alerts, 5 were related to increased drug poisoning events. Listed below are the alerts pertaining to samples submitted for drug checking.

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
January 20, 2026 Powell River	Down	Fluorofentanyl, Medetomidine*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples (green chunk, yellow chunk) sold as down in Powell River tested positive for fluorofentanyl and medetomidine, a tranquilizer more toxic than xylazine. May cause low heart rate and prolonged sedation.
January 26, 2026 Vancouver	Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Uncertain Oil	Positive	Negative	White triangular pressed tablet with imprint "DID" sold as hydromorphone (Dilaudid or "dilly 8") in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and negative for hydromorphone.
January 27, 2026 Vernon	Alprazolam (Xanax)	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Uncertain Oil, Medetomidine*	N/A	N/A	Xanax tablet sold as Xanax or alprazolam tested positive for medetomidine in Vernon.
January 29, 2026 Kelowna	Oxycodone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Uncertain Oil, Medetomidine	Positive	Negative	Oxycodone sold as Oxycodone/Oxy tested positive for fentanyl or fentanyl analog in Kelowna.

All spectrometry results are determined by FTIR, with the exception of the following:

\* Results provided by complementary testing partner [Substance](#) using Paper Spray Mass Spectrometry

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.

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

### About this data

Data represented in this report is collected from our partner sites across the province using Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometry in combination with BTNX fentanyl test strips and benzodiazepine test strips when applicable. We note the FTIR spectrometer has a detection limit of approximately 5% concentration (McCrae, 2019).

**Depressant includes:**  
benzodiazepines,  
etizolam, GHB, hypnotics

**Opioid includes:**  
"down", heroin, fentanyl  
(unregulated opioids), and  
pharmaceutical opioids

**Polysubstance includes:**  
cross-category mixtures

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

**Stimulant includes:**  
methamphetamine,  
"speed," cocaine and  
crack cocaine,  
cathinones

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

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of [our partners](#) to collect this data.

To find drug checking services in your area please visit our [site locator](#).