



Cowichan Tribes

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Media Release

This opioid crisis seems unending and has claimed the life of a precious young girl only 14 years old, and continues to affect many more youth in our community. Our most heartfelt condolences and thoughtful prayers go out to the parents of this beautiful young girl, and we offer our most intense commitment to do something about this terrible addiction in our community. There is no greater loss in life than that of a child, and even greater still is the need for all of us to rise to the challenge to honour her memory by coming together to end illicit drugs and addiction in our community.

Cowichan Tribes leadership is committed to this purpose - to end illicit drugs and addiction in our community. And we need your help. We need to start talking about these issues and we need to start talking with each other in an effort to maintain our kinship to one another. Our Elders and Ancestors teach us to honour our long standing relations to one another and to always hold each other up in times of suffering. That time is now. We must all find ways to love, to listen, to talk, and to come to terms with our resolve to rid our young people of this terrible addiction that we've come to know as the "opioid crisis."

We will continue to work together as your elected Chief and Council, and we will continue to work with our staff to help us plan and respond to these issues. I have instructed the General Manager to start a ***Cowichan Tribes Opioid Crisis Response Task Force*** that will bring together a diverse group of people from our community to plan an immediate and long term response to these layered and complex issues.

This response will strengthen already existing supports in the broader community that are working with Cowichan Tribes in dealing with the ongoing opioid crisis. We ask that you reach out to our staff for support for counselling, Naloxone kits/training, referrals for detox and/or treatment, and important information about the risks of opioid and drug use. A good first step in preventing drug use is to inform each other about the risks involved, and to have meaningful conversations with our children and youth about the need to stay safe and to be aware of the dangers associated with today's drugs.

The duly elected members of the Cowichan Tribes Chief and Council raise our hands in recognition of those community members that are standing up and protesting their frustration against drugs and drug dealers in our territory. There has to be a time when drug addiction and the selling of drugs to our youth are no longer acceptable. And that time is now. A strong energy is created when we all come together with a purpose to combat this affliction in our homes and territory, and this strength is what will uplift our children and youth. We encourage you to keep working together and to keep making your demonstrations known, and we also remind you to keep each other safe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Huy tseep q'u

Chief William Seymour
Cowichan Tribes