

VCH-Vancouver's withdrawal management centre Operations Management Plan

There is an urgent need in Vancouver for expanded, state-of-the-art withdrawal management services. The proposed VCH withdrawal management centre will facilitate lifesaving recoveries and ongoing wellness for clients.

Services at the site will focus on withdrawal management provided and designed for people who want to reduce/eliminate their use of substances.

The Centre will offer a wide range of state-of-the-art withdrawal services such as:

- 51 inpatient withdrawal management beds;
- Outpatient and home-based withdrawal management services;
- A sobering centre for keeping people safe while they sober up;
- Approximately 20 new beds of short-term housing to provide continued support for clients having completed detox and in transition to longer-term solutions, such as supportive transitional living residences;
- Services that are trauma-informed and culturally appropriate, intended to meet Indigenous and other community members' care needs.
- An academic teaching, research and learning hub to support staff development, knowledge transfer, and sharing best practices in withdrawal management.

Integrating a range of services allows us to provide a continuum of care within the facility that will help people navigate the system more seamlessly by providing a central point of access.

The centre will be designed around best practice inpatient care and decades of experience with services in residential neighbourhoods that support people to integrate back into their communities. It will be designed to have a minimal impact on the neighbourhood, as all client drop-off and pick-ups will occur within the building, with access through the side alley. There will not be sirens or noise upon arrival at the proposed centre. If a person needs emergency care, they will be taken to the hospital.

While the centre will be open and staffed to serve client needs 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, hours of specific services will vary.

Access Central and Central Addiction Intake Teams (CAIT)

Description:

The Access Central Team will be responsible for referring clients to the most appropriate services they need within the withdrawal management centre. CAIT will be available to coordinate post-withdrawal care for clients. A primary goal of withdrawal management is to ensure people have the supports in place to progress to further treatment, which may include day programs, outpatients counselling, specialized treatment programs, supportive transitional living residences, etc.

Hours:

Access Central team: 7 days/week, 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

CAIT: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Inpatient Withdrawal Management

Description:

The 51-bed inpatient withdrawal management program will serve adults 19 years and older who need either on-site medical management or medical monitoring during withdrawal. Some withdrawal situations carry significant risk, needing medical care over the course of the process. Risk can be associated with withdrawing from certain substances (i.e. alcohol, benzodiazepines), if the person is pregnant, or if the person has a pre-existing physical or mental health disorder. Medical management services are unique and important in providing safe withdrawal and stabilization for these complex clients. Medical monitoring is suitable for clients who can benefit from on-site support, but whose withdrawal poses a lower risk. Inpatient clients can generally expect stays up to seven days. Clients will be medically assessed and provided with medication-based treatments, individual counselling, educational groups, addiction recovery groups and culturally informed programs. Clients will also have access to high quality meals and snacks, medication management, clean linens and clothing, and leisure and recreational activities. They will also receive assistance in accessing financial supports, safe/supportive housing, inpatient addiction treatment programs, culturally supportive programs, ongoing primary care and speciality care as needed.

Hours:

The inpatient withdrawal management program will be staffed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. Intake hours will be between 9 a.m. – 9 p.m., 7 days/week.

Sobering Centre

Description: A sobering centre client is:

- Anyone across Vancouver who needs a medically monitored, safe place to sober up
- Doesn't need emergency care (i.e. a hospital Emergency Department)
- Doesn't typically have a substance use/drinking problem but who has had too much to drink and is publicly intoxicated

- Typically someone sobering up from alcohol over-consumption, not other substances (in which case, they would most likely be treated at a hospital emergency department)

Timeline: On average, 4-12 hour stay

Example intake and care pathway:

Under the Liquor Control and Licensing Act and the Offence Act, police can take an intoxicated person into custody and hold them until they are able to take care of themselves. Depending on the circumstances, Vancouver Police Department (VPD) will decide to take a person to:

- Vancouver jail (if they have criminal/safety alerts on their file)
- An emergency department (if medical emergency care is needed)
- The new withdrawal management centre (for medical monitoring) (no lights or sirens will be used)

If taken to the new withdrawal management centre, VPD will:

- Call ahead to ensure space and no safety concerns. (Where concerns are identified, a person will not be brought to the new withdrawal management centre).
- Bring them in discreetly by a side entrance (no sirens or other noise).
- Conduct a search before transitioning the person to VCH staff.
- Ensure the person is safely transitioned to the sobering unit.
- VCH staff will then admit the client into the sobering unit.
- The client is observed by an experienced nurse with a check-in every 15 minutes while sobering up
- Once sobering is complete, the client will be cleared to leave by a medical professional and offered the choice of returning home or accessing additional services.
- If the client requires more structured withdrawal, they will be assessed by a medical professional for an inpatient unit stay or connected with other services.
- They will then be assisted with identifying how to access those treatments.

If the client is not already connected to care, VCH can ensure next steps for needed services are discussed, set up for the client, and that we continue to follow them to ensure they receive the care they need.

Hours:

The Sobering Centre will be staffed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

Substance Use Treatment and Response Team (START)

Description:

The START program is designed to provide rapid access, at-home treatment options for individuals needing help to detox safely with supports. The goals of START includes providing safe withdrawal from alcohol and other substances, providing processes that are humane and protect client dignity, initiating opioid agonist treatment (Suboxone), using safer take-home dosing, and linking clients to ongoing treatment and support. Eligible clients will meet with clinicians (a nurse and physician) at the withdrawal management centre to develop a suitable treatment plan and receive support on an outpatient basis over their typical two-week treatment program.

Hours:

The START program will be staffed 7 days/week from 8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Short-term Transition Beds

Description:

Approximately 20 new beds of short-term, transitional beds will provide continued support for clients having completed detox and in transition to longer-term solutions, such as supportive transitional living residences.

The beds will be located within the withdrawal management centre, but will have a separate entrance and staffing model. Stays will generally last up to 30 days. Clients will receive medication management, high quality meals and snacks as well as ongoing access to a variety of recovery and support programs.

Hours:

Staffed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, with intake during regular business hours, 7 days/week.

Academic Teaching and Learning Centre

Description:

An academic teaching, research and learning hub will support staff development, knowledge transfer and sharing best practices in withdrawal management.

The Centre will maintain and engage in activities associated with a wide range of recognized research bodies, including the CIHR-funded Canadian Research Initiative on Substance Misuse (CRISM) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Teaching and research activities will focus on medical (training for psychiatrist and physicians), nursing (addictions fellowships for Registered Nurses/Registered Psychiatric Nurse) and allied health professionals (e.g. Registered Social Worker, Registered Clinical Counsellors). Through research and new initiatives, the Academic Teaching and Learning Centre will be able to provide unique care opportunities for clients who access withdrawal management centre services.

Hours:

The Academic Teaching and Learning Centre will primarily operate during normal daytime business hours (9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.), but will operate at other times as needed to support education, research and specialty support services.