



# Shuswap Nation Tribal Council

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Secwepemc Elders and Chiefs Declare State of Emergency over Fentanyl Crisis**

**March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (Secwepemc Territory/Kamloops, BC)** – On February 23rd, 2017, the Secwepemc Elders Council (“SEC”) expressed their concern over the fentanyl crisis that has overwhelmed our communities across the Secwepemc Nation. In response, the SEC called a Nation State of Emergency and called upon Secwepemc leadership to take immediate action to address this growing epidemic.

On March 1st, 2017, the Chiefs of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council (“SNTC”) responded to the Elders and have committed to building a coordinated approach to address this prolific state of fentanyl use and overdoses.

“It is important that all members within our communities are given the resources needed to be adequately informed on the issue of fentanyl. Prevention and awareness are critical for our members, their families, and the community to effectively combat this crisis,” expressed Tribal Chief Kukpi7 Wayne Christian.

The SNTC Chiefs are calling on the First Nations Health Council, Interior Health Authority, RCMP and all other available resources to work with us in joint partnership and fill any gaps which are contributing to this growing crisis.

Moving forward, it is important to assess the state of this crisis through the accurate collection of statistics on the number of overdoses and overdose related deaths. Immediate action needs to be taken to inform citizens on the presence of fentanyl in street drugs, the symptoms and probability of overdoses, and the treatment options available.

Kukpi7 Christian further stated: “Addictions do not discriminate and this Fentanyl Crisis is deadly as it takes lives regardless of age and with only one time use. Get educated on how to prevent this from killing your loved ones.”

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### **Media Contact**

Kukpi7 Wayne Christian – (250) 503-7072

## Resources

As per the recent Interior Health Press Release from March 2, 2017 – “Carfentanil presence confirmed in Interior Health”, the following recommendations may help reduce overdose risk:

Not using drugs at all is the best way to avoid overdose and other health impacts. Interior Health recommends people abstain from using any type of illegal drug, if at all possible. If abstaining is not an option, the following tips can help reduce the risk of overdose:

- Don't mix different drugs (including pharmaceutical medications, street drugs, and alcohol)
- Don't take drugs when you are alone, have a sober buddy with you. Leave door unlocked. Tell someone to check on you.
- Use less and pace yourself. Do testers to check strength - take a small sample of a drug before taking your usual dosage.
- Keep an eye out for your friends – stay together and look out for each other.
- Carry a Naloxone kit and know how to use it. A list of locations to get a kit can be found on the Interior Health [website](#).
- Recognize the signs of an OD: Slow or no breathing, gurgling or gasping, lips/fingertips turning blue, difficult to rouse (awaken), non-responsive.
- If someone thinks they may be having an overdose or is witnessing an overdose, follow the [SAVE ME steps](#) and call 9-1-1 immediately, do not delay.

For more resources and links related to overdose and substance use, visit: <https://www.interiorhealth.ca/AboutUs/Leadership/MHO/Pages/PHEmergency.aspx>

