

For Immediate Release

April 3, 2020

**COWICHAN, B.C.** - The Cowichan Leadership Group is grateful to the BC Government for today's announcement of a new Wellness and Recovery Centre in Cowichan Valley. The new centre will be located at 5878 York Road, Duncan and is set to open in fall 2020.

Services will include support for people living with addiction and mental health concerns and will bring together primary care, harm reduction, case management, overdose prevention, and on-site treatment in one location. The Centre will house Cowichan's existing community mental health and substance use services, including outreach teams. The Centre will offer new services, including nursing, supports for people in their treatment and recovery, and improved access to treatment for opioid use disorder.

In October, 2019, the Cowichan Leadership Group — whose membership includes Mayors from the region, Chair of the Regional District, Chief of Cowichan Tribes, Cowichan's MLA and MP, and representation from the School District, Island Health, RCMP — invited Minister Judy Darcy to tour Cowichan facilities and services to better understand the urgency for addictions treatment and wellness supports in the Cowichan Valley. Together with front-line mental health workers, the Leadership Group presented a proposal to the minister for augmented services. This proposal was initially denied. Earlier this spring, the Leadership Group followed up with letters to ten provincial ministries asking for their help in finding solutions to an escalating problem related to addictions issues in the Cowichan region.

Until the Centre is open, overdose prevention services will continue to be located at 221 Trunk Road and operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association – Cowichan Valley. The service is open 7 days a week from 1-7 p.m.

The Canadian Mental Health Association – Cowichan Valley Branch (CMHA) has operated the Overdose Prevention Service under contract and funding from Island Health since September 2017.

#### **Quotes**

- Sonia Furstenau, MLA: "This project is another example of the incredible things the people of Cowichan can achieve by working together," said Sonia Furstenau, MLA for the Cowichan Valley. "Having one, easily accessible place where people can come for mental health and substance use supports will contribute significantly to the health and wellness of our entire region."
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