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*Project: Impacts of COVID-19 on emergency department service delivery for people who use opioids: Royal Alexandra Hospital and Peter Lougheed Centre service utilization trends and patient perspectives*



### Background

Canada's opioid crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic are syndemic public health emergencies that place people who use opioids at extreme risk of negative outcomes. The devastating impact of these compounding risks is evident in Emergency Departments (EDs), which act as a primary point of contact for supporting people who use opioids. Although many hospitals have recently enhanced the availability of opioid-related supports in EDs, COVID-19-related policy and practice changes may have

unintentionally undermined progress in providing equitable ED care to people who use opioids.

*Objectives:* The proposed research will explore the impacts of COVID-19 on ED utilization and care for people who use opioids. Specifically, the research will 1) describe how COVID-19 has impacted ED care and opioid-related presentations and

explore patient-identified causes for observed trends; and 2) describe how COVID-19 has impacted patient-reported experiences and satisfaction with ED care.