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## Drug poisoning prevention app marks two years of saving lives

**IH-WIDE** - A mobile phone app launched two years ago has continued to gain popularity among people who use drugs and those who support them, and is successfully preventing toxic drug deaths in B.C.

"The Lifeguard Digital Health App has a proven track record of keeping people safe and is an important part of our government's response to the toxic, unpredictable illicit drug supply," said Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Sheila Malcolmson.

Since its launch in May 2020, the app has been used by more than 9,000 people in B.C. There have been 104,783 sessions, resulting in 132 ambulance calls with 96 "confirmed ok" call backs to the app user. There have been 28 drug poisonings reversed and, most importantly, there have been zero deaths reported by Lifeguard.

In Interior Health there were 12,084 sessions (May 2020 – May 2022) including 14 ambulance calls. In April 2022, there were 422 sessions within Interior Health.

"There are many reasons why people use substances alone," said Interior Health president and CEO Susan Brown. "The stigma surrounding substance use is one of the main reasons. While we encourage people to access supports such as overdose prevention sites and avoid using alone, the Lifeguard App is an important alternative."

The concept is simple: Once downloaded on a mobile device, the app is activated by the user before they take their dose. After 50 seconds the app will sound an alarm. If the person using the app doesn't hit a button to stop the alarm, indicating they are fine, the alarm grows louder and if the individual does not respond, the app will trigger medical assistance with a call to ambulance services.

"I have used the Lifeguard app while using on my own and also when trying a new substance to ensure I would have help if needed. It's a great app," said one person with lived experience with substance use.

The Lifeguard app has continued to evolve since its launch. It now includes access to additional crisis lines, substance use supports, drug alerts, and guides to perform CPR and deliver Naloxone. In 2021 Métis Nation BC partnered with Lifeguard to launch a version for the Métis community.

To learn more about substance use services and the toxic drug crisis visit [interiorhealth.ca](https://interiorhealth.ca).

To learn more about the app visit [lifeguardddh.com](https://lifeguardddh.com).

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We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.