1. Between July 2016 and January 2021, opioid overdoses accounted for over 24,626 deaths, with 90% of these deaths occurring from the use of non-pharmaceutical opioids.

2. Fentanyl is 20-40x more potent than heroin and can be fatal, even in small doses.

3. A Schedule I indictable offense can lead to imprisonment for a maximum of 7 years while a first offense can lead to a fine of $1000 and/or 6 months imprisonment.

4. 34% of people who died from illicit substances in British Columbia between 2011 and 2016 had some sort of contact with police in the preceding 2 years.

5. In the two weeks post-release, an incarcerated individual’s risk for overdose is 56x higher than that of the general population.

6. Those who had police contact have significantly less total income and less consistent employment compared to their counterparts who did not have any police contact.

7. In Nova Scotia, only those already receiving OAT prior to admission continue to receive this therapy in prison.

8. Lowest-income neighborhoods exhibited more opioid-related deaths, hospital admissions, emergency department visits, and neonatal abstinence syndrome. The rates of opioid-related harms in the lowest income quintile were at least double that of the highest income quintile within all of these categories.

9. Between 2011 and 2016, hospitalizations related to opioid poisoning were approximately 4 times higher in the lowest income quintile than compared to people in the highest income quintile.
10. Almost one in three sex workers who use drugs in Vancouver experience at least one non-fatal overdose.

11. There is up to 5-fold greater opioid-related hospitalizations among Indigenous people compared to non-Indigenous people.

12. Indigenous women in BC have a rate of opioid-related deaths 10 times greater than other women in the province.

13. The number of opioid-related deaths in First Nations people increased by 132% from pre-pandemic levels, compared to a 68% rise among non-First Nations people.

14. In Alberta, there was a 65% decrease in visits to supervised consumption sites at the onset of the COVID pandemic.

15. The rates of emergency medical services (EMS) for suspected opioid overdose increased by 57% and the rates of fatal opioid overdose increased by 60% in Ontario since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

16. In July 2020, the Association of Nova Scotia Police Chiefs backed the ask to decriminalize the possession of small amounts of illegal drugs.

17. In June 2021, Ontario Big City Mayors asked for the creation and funding of Mental Health Crisis Responses Units that would use trained mental health professionals with police officers to respond to low-risk crisis calls and wellness checks.