

June 17, 2016

File: 195-20/BCEHS All
Cliff: 1027039

To: All BCEHS Staff

RE: Revised Emergency Medical Dispatch Policy - Police Notification 5.3.3

In May, BCEHS approved a policy revision to our Patient Care Communications & Planning (PCCP) Emergency Medical Dispatch Policy 5.3.3 that clearly defines when our PCCP staff should ask for police assistance upon triaging a call or during our response and attendance to calls.

It has come to the attention of senior leadership that the change has caused concern among front line staff with a misunderstanding that BCEHS was not notifying police on intentional overdose calls (suicide attempts).

Our revised policy is aimed at increasing paramedic and public safety by ensuring police respond quickly in overdose cases where we truly need assistance.

The rationale for the policy is that anyone witnessing a drug overdose might fear repercussions as a result of police routinely attending every call. They might be less likely to call 9-1-1 for assistance by paramedics if they think police will also attend.

The revised policy specifies that PCCP staff **must** notify police to attend:

- Where the situation is believed to be dangerous to responders, or nearby members of the public, i.e. violent or aggressive patients, weapons present, or potential CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive) events.
- In the case of any attempted suicide (drug-related or otherwise)

This policy revision is consistent with the BC Coroners Service's *Child Death Review Panel 2016 Report* recommendation that BCEHS help reduce barriers for people seeking immediate medical assistance when an overdose has occurred.

Under the revised policy, any drug overdose responses not fitting these criteria are no longer reported to police. Upon initial or continuous scene risk assessment should field staff identify any of the above risks, staff are to ensure their immediate safety and follow normal procedures to request police assistance.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Jodi Jensen
Chief Operating Officer