

# An evaluation of the use of Community Transition Teams to improve health outcomes for individual with an opioid use disorder following release from British Columbia Corrections

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## Background

- Substance use disorders impact a considerable portion of the correctional population with opioid use being of particular concern. A recent British Columbia (BC) Coroner's Service death review report examining all illicit drug overdose deaths from Jan 2016 to July 2017, found 2/3 of all decedents had previous or current involvement with BC's correctional system.
- The period following release from a correctional centre is one of heightened vulnerability. Accordingly, many newly-released individuals feel ill equipped to navigate this process and, in the absence of proper support, are at high-risk for relapse to substance use, recidivism, and a host of other negative outcomes.
- To address this, Provincial Health Services Authority – Correctional Health has implemented the use of Community Transition Teams (CTTs), which take an active role in supporting clients with an opioid use disorder (OUD) to identify their priorities and achieve their treatment goals following release from a provincial correctional centre in BC.

## Research Objectives

- To develop and use harmonized data systems to monitor and evaluate relevant health and social outcomes associated with the use of CTTs among individuals with an OUD upon release from a BC correctional centre.
- To identify and respond to implementation gaps associated with the scale up of CTTs in diverse correctional settings in BC.

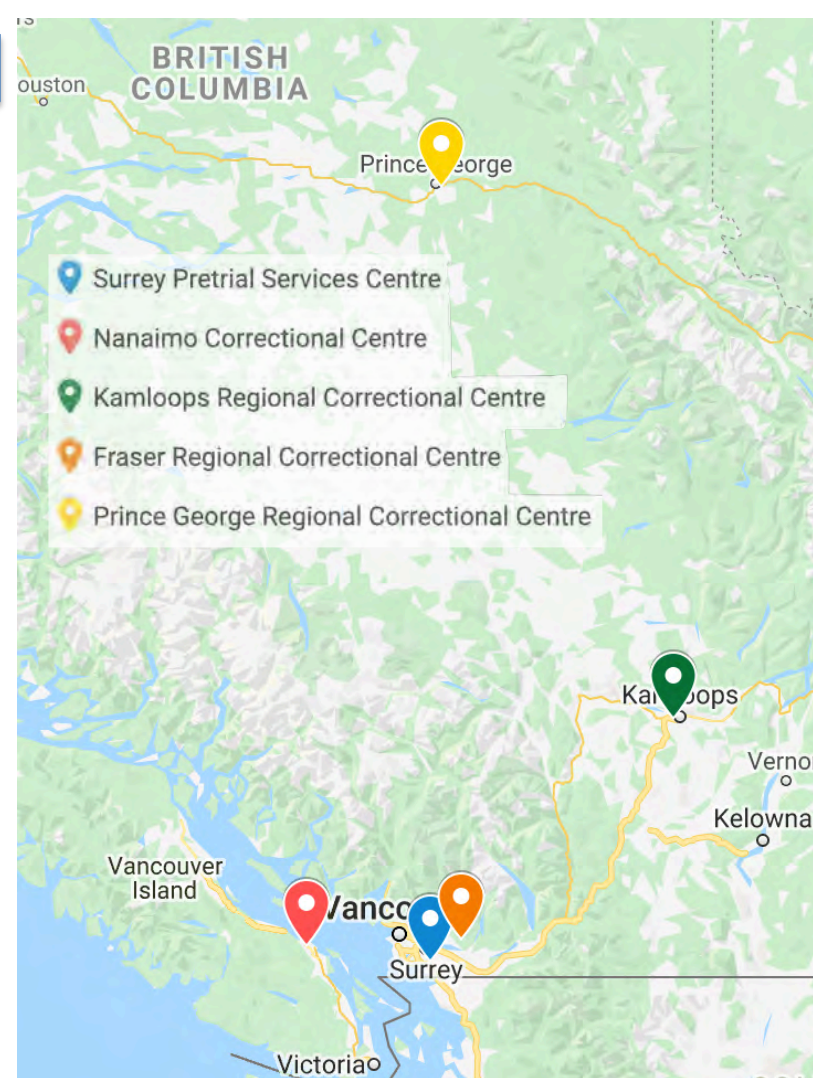


Figure 1: Locations of provincial correctional centres included in the evaluation.

## Approach

- An observational cohort of 400 individuals living with an OUD from five BC provincial correctional centers will be invited to complete a one-time, interviewer-administered questionnaire soliciting information about substance use, previous and current addiction treatment, and mental health.
- Participants may consent to annual database linkage through Population Data BC (PopData) capturing administrative health and correctional records for a five-year follow up period.
- A sub-sample of participants will also complete qualitative interviews a month following release to capture perspectives on implementation barriers.

## OPAC Corrections: Data Linkage Process

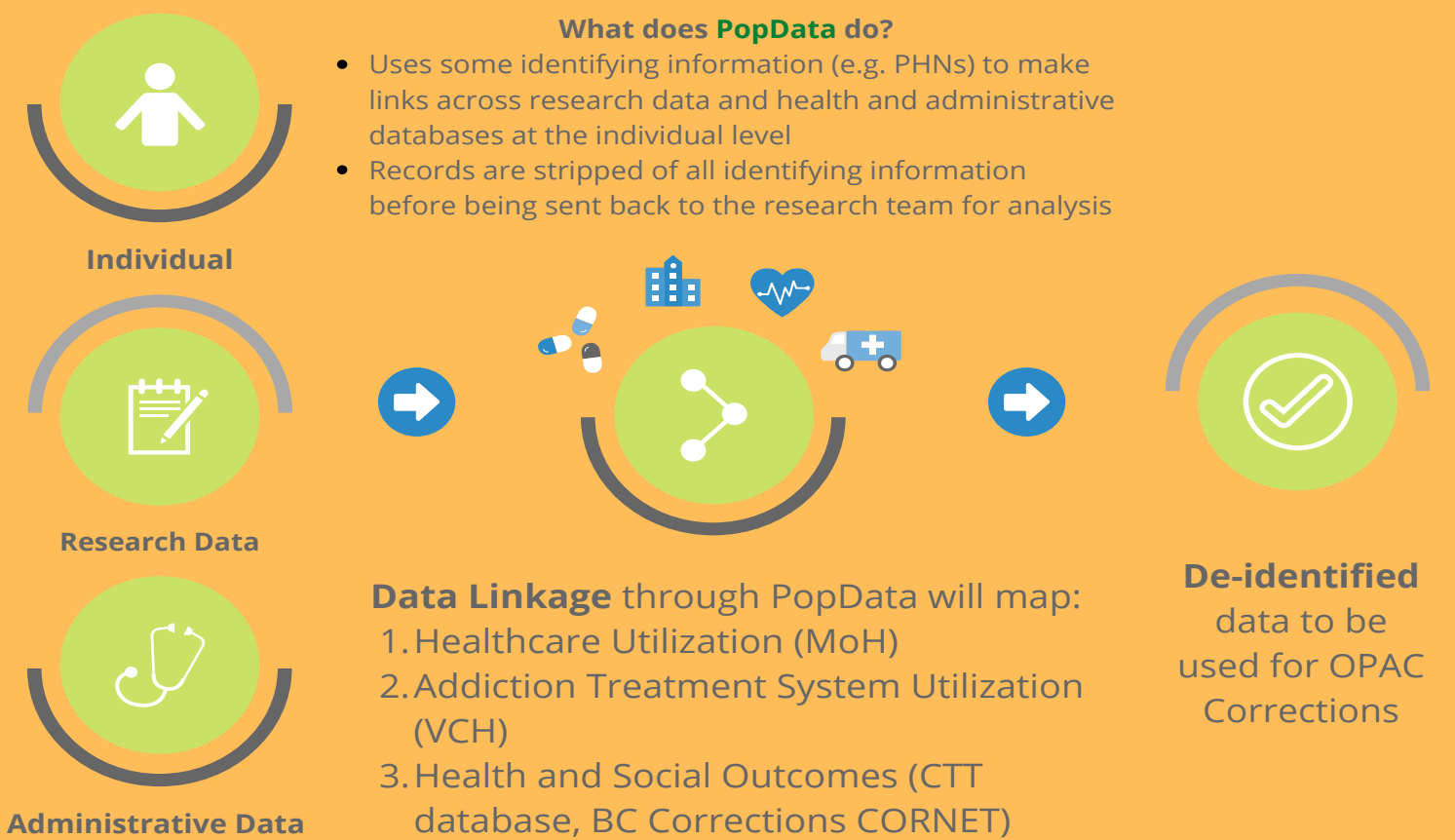


Figure 2: The data linkage process.

## Results

- The study results will be employed to inform responses regarding the identified implementation barriers, as well as support the scale up of the CTT program.
- The findings will gather new information to identify modifiable factors and actionable strategies within the correctional health system and aftercare environments that can address system-level deficits that contribute to the risk of relapse, overdose, and other negative outcomes.
- Moreover, knowledge gained through this research will apprise the development of other evidence based programs that can be utilized to optimize the transition from correctional settings to the community.

## Conclusion

- Findings from this study may demonstrate that the collaborative efforts of CTTs could lead to expansion of prolonged and integrative support for addiction treatment in the critical post-release period.
- The implementation of CTTs may serve to reduce the risk of overdose and death following release.
- The proposed evaluation will generate critical knowledge regarding the health outcomes associated with use of CTTs.

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