

September 2, 2024,

Dear Minister Beare,

We are writing to ask that the Ministry establish minimum standards/comprehensive first aid guidelines for dealing with students in post-secondary institutions.

As you are aware, Sidney McIntyre-Starko had a witnessed collapse from fentanyl poisoning in a residence at the University of Victoria and died a preventable death. Campus security was called immediately, and arrived with enough time to save Sidney had they provided timely basic CPR. After they arrived to two unconscious students who were blue from a lack of oxygen, it took security officers 12 minutes to initiate CPR. Given permanent brain damage starts approximately 4 minutes after breathing becomes inadequate, this campus security response was completely inadequate. It took the 911 operator 3.5 minutes simply to understand the location of a building that has been on campus for over 50 years, and then another 3 minutes to decide to dispatch an ambulance. Given BC 911 operators can cause such lengthy delays, it is crucial that campus security or campus first aid responders are prepared and better able to perform during severe medical emergencies.

We are grateful for the work of the Overdose and Response Steering Committee. In addition to the measures outlined by that committee, we believe the post-secondary ministry must act to protect students and university staff during all severe medical emergencies, not just overdoses.

This must include guidelines for minimum number of personnel trained in first aid, minimum number of AED's with clear and easy access to online maps on campus of where they are located (<https://security.ubc.ca/home/safety-prevention-resources/automated-external-defibrillators/>), protocols for common medical emergencies, mandated frequency that first aid responders must review/practice protocols, and mandated protocols for debriefing and reviewing significant medical responses. If medical responses are not reviewed appropriately, there will be more scenarios where the security department believes that a response was amazing, when in fact the response was deadly. It would also be prudent to mandate that qualified staff are put in senior positions of security and medical response.

For four weeks after Sidney's death, the daily security muster briefing for security officers referenced this incident: "Campus security did an amazing job with their response and assistance to this call." Instead of taking the opportunity to teach their staff how to perform better, the University of Victoria chose to portray the response to their own staff as 'amazing'. For several months after Sidney's death, the Director of Campus Security persisted in stating publicly that the response by security was commendable, that they followed the basics of their training. This disastrous response, and the obvious lack of insight into how to correctly assess and learn from a medical response, underscores the need for mandatory procedures and protocols set out by the government that universities must follow during medical emergencies

Thank you again for all your work,

Caroline McIntyre and Kenton Starko