



Creating Caring Communities

Harm Reduction is Health Promotion

History of ANKORS/MH & Addictions/Public Health Networking and the formation of the Creating Caring Communities Committee

2004: ANKORS, West Kootenay/Boundary Addiction Services, and Public Health began meeting to identify gaps in services and increase access to needle exchange (Nx) drop boxes and Nx services.

2004-2005: Drugs and Addiction: Meeting the Challenge committee came to be as a result of the prior group in 2004, ANKORS, West Kootenay/Boundary Addiction Services, Public Health, RCMP, Freedom Quest Regional Youth Addiction Services and Selkirk College Nursing and Social Services Faculty. West Kootenay/Boundary Addiction Services was approached by RCMP with funding to initiate a prevention initiative regarding addictions. Conference was achieved on March 12 of 2005.

2005-2006: The community needle exchange committee launched the new needle exchange logo in 2006. The Nx logo is part of a broader community Nx initiative. It was an ANKORS funded proposal to create a branding logo to identify Harm Reduction supplies distribution sites in effect to increase services West Kootenay/Boundary area. At about this time Mental Health & Substance Use agreed to have their outreach workers have available Nx care packages to people who use injection drugs.

2005: West Kootenay/Boundary Addiction Services merged with Mental Health Services and became Mental Health & Addictions.

2006: Methadone Maintenance Treatment Advisory Committee is comprised of ANKORS, Mental Health and Addictions, Public Health, Pharmacists, Chemical Dependency Nurse, an MMT prescribing physician and MMT clients. The committee formed as a result of a community based research survey distributed and collated by the ANKORS Needle Exchange. The purpose of the group was to support the delivery of methadone maintenance services in the West Kootenay/Boundary Health Services area.

- to increase access for clients to MMT services.
- to recruit prescribing physicians and dispensing pharmacists in WK/B area
- to support prescribing physicians and dispensing pharmacists in WK/B area
- program development
- program evaluation
- development of an appeal/complaints process
- regional training

2006-2007: Received funding from the City of Grand Forks through a UBCM grant to fund a crystal meth prevention project as a Boundary area community response to methamphetamine use



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22

2007-2008: Regional Harm Reduction Committee -The group began from issues based committee Nx committee & MMT Committee.

2009: The Regional Harm Reduction Committee took leave in 2008 due to Summer Holidays and increased work -loads. In 2009 ANKORS received funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada to initiate Rise Up Community Engagement Project (RUCEP). The goal of the project is to reduce barriers to accessing health & social services for people who use injection and/or inhalation drugs and/or people who live with hepatitis C and/or HIV/AIDS and people who may be at risk of blood borne infections. One of the activities that RUCEP provided was community based research. Two separate surveys were distributed. One survey was distributed to people who use injection and/or inhalation drugs and/or people who live with hepatitis C and/or HIV/AIDS and people who may be at risk of blood borne infections. Another survey was distributed to health care and social service providers. The results of the surveys were intended to identify gaps in services of the health and social service sector. The themes identified are:

- partnership/collaboration & resources
- peer development
- knowledge exchange

One of the themes evident in both surveys was the lack of knowledge and education with health and social service providers regarding issues relating to people who use drugs. In response, a 2010 RUCEP funding proposal addressed to the Public Health Agency of Canada was granted to provide a conference.

The existing partnership of the Regional Harm Reduction Committee came together and built on its networks forming the Creating Caring Communities (CCC). The CCC committee put together additional proposals to Colombia Basin Trust and to the IHA for funding for the Creating Caring Communities Conference.

In April of 2011, Creating Caring Communities initiated “Addressing barriers to health care for people who use injection and/or inhalation drugs” conference. 110 health and social service providers participated in the conference. The CCC conference proved successful and the exuberance of participants pointed in the direction of another conference, to be held in the spring of 2013.

Today the CCC committee is working on such initiatives as public forums, with our first forum in October 2012 in Grand Forks. We hope to provide similar events in other West Kootenay areas such as Trail, Castlegar, Nelson and Nakusp. We continue to expand our networks.