



BC Request for Federal Exemption to Decriminalize Personal Possession

April 2021

NNPBC is delighted to hear that the province of British Columbia will be officially requesting a federal exemption from the Government of Canada to decriminalize personal possession of drugs under section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.¹ NNPBC has long supported decriminalization of drugs for personal use and fully endorses the province of BC's move in this direction, recognizing that the criminalization of drug involved lifestyles significantly contributes to risk of overdose.

April 2021 marks five years since the declaration of the overdose crisis as a public health emergency in BC, and to date more than 7000 lives have been needlessly lost to overdose.

Nursing's reputation as the world's most trusted health profession is based on its long history of working with the most vulnerable populations, often in times of crisis. NNPBC will continue to support safe-supply and decriminalization. By focusing on the harms caused by current drug laws, we have an opportunity to continue working towards a society that does not punish those who use substances, but rather promotes health and well-being and values a just and equitable society for individuals and populations.

Resources

- [NNPBC Overdose Crisis Resources](#)
- [Issues Brief: Bill C-22](#)
- [Issues Brief: Safe Supply](#)
- [Position Statement: Improving Access to Diacetylmorphine](#)
- [Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of British Columbia \(NNPBC\) and the Harm Reduction Nurses Association \(HRNA\) call for the decriminalization of people who use drugs in B.C.](#)

¹CDSA- Section 56 <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-concerns/controlled-substances-precursor-chemicals/exemptions.html>