

## ***NORTH AMERICA'S ONLY SAFE INJECTION SITE SAVES LIVES***

Located in Vancouver, Insite is North America's first and only legal supervised injection site. It is a clean, safe place where people can go to inject their own drugs and connect to health care services. Although the service is not without controversy, research shows the service is saving lives and stemming the spread of infectious disease in Canada's most disadvantaged neighbourhood.

- Insite is the first - and currently only - legal public injection site in Canada. Insite has been operated since 2003 by Vancouver Coastal Health.
- Insite helps connect marginalized populations and hard-to-reach clients with care providers and moves them toward health and addiction services that will keep them alive and, eventually, improve their health.
- Insite is a harm reduction initiative that aims to decrease preventable deaths related to substance use and reduce the transmission of communicable diseases.
- Harm reduction and education measures at Insite have helped reduce the spread of HIV in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. In 2006, there were just 30 new cases of HIV reported in the Downtown Eastside among injection drug users, compared to an estimated 2,100 new cases a decade earlier.
- Insite handles an average of 600 injections daily out of 11 injection stalls, and recorded 286,339 visits in 2008.
- In 2008:
  - 226 overdose interventions were recorded
  - Nurses provided first aid and medical care on 3,014 occasions
  - A total of 4,986 referrals were made to other social and health services.
- More than 30 independent peer reviewed studies confirm that Insite is saving lives in the Downtown Eastside.
- Insite has been subject to rigorous, independent third party research and evaluation by the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, which is recognized as one of the world's leading research organizations. The Centre's research has been published in peer-reviewed journals including the New England Journal of Medicine, the British Medical Journal, the Canadian Medical Association Journal, and The Lancet.
- Vancouver Coastal Health is responsible for the delivery of \$2.8 billion in healthcare services to more than one million people in communities from Richmond through Vancouver, the North Shore, Sunshine Coast, Sea to Sky corridor, Powell River, Bella Bella and Bella Coola.

## CONTACTS

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- Anne McNabb is Acting Director, Mental Health & Addiction for Vancouver Community, a Vancouver Coastal Health portfolio that oversees the delivery and operation of mental health and addiction services. She is the operations leader for Insite.

### **Dr. David Marsh**

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- Dr. David Marsh, Vancouver Coastal Health's physician leader for Insite, is knowledgeable in the area of addiction management and treatment, and also about the unique population of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and the clients who use Insite.

## VISUAL RESOURCES

- Interior photographs and video tour of Insite are available at <http://www.vch.ca/sis/>.
- Shooting of Insite B-roll can be arranged by request through Vancouver Coastal Health Communications and Public Affairs, Laurie Dawkins, at 604-708-5310.

## WEB RESOURCES

- Vancouver Coastal Health's own web page listing for Insite. Contains facts, figures, photos, research and a video about the supervised injection site. <http://www.vch.ca/sis/>

## MEDIA COVERAGE

- *Inside Insite: A firsthand look at addiction*, Vancouver Courier, April 2009, [www2.canada.com/vancouvercourier/sightandsound/story.html?id=ae97d2ee-6148-4b7d-98d3-69352137eec0](http://www2.canada.com/vancouvercourier/sightandsound/story.html?id=ae97d2ee-6148-4b7d-98d3-69352137eec0)
- *Staying Alive*, CBC The Fifth Estate, March 2009, [www.cbc.ca/fifth/2008-2009/staying\\_alive/video.html](http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/2008-2009/staying_alive/video.html)
- *Fixed*, Vancouver Magazine, January 2009, [www.vanmag.com/News and Features/Fixed](http://www.vanmag.com/News_and_Features/Fixed)
- *Canada's safe haven for junkies*, Salon.com, September 2003, <http://dir.salon.com/story/news/feature/2003/09/08/vancouver/index.html>

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### **For assistance or more information:**

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