

April 5, 2022

Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV) has played an active role in supporting the most vulnerable members of our community since 1928. For close to 30 years, FSGV has operated withdrawal management services at **Directions Youth Detox**, a voluntary home-like social detox that provides room, board, counselling and other supports to youth who are detoxing from substances that do not require around-the-clock medical supervision.

Effective June 3, 2022 Directions Youth Detox will be closing, following a decision by Vancouver Coastal Health to redesign withdrawal management services for youth.

While this was not a decision made by FSGV, we appreciate that service delivery models need to evolve as new evidence emerges. The toxic drug supply has increased the complexity of providing detox supports, and we must adapt. We also recognize that – amidst an opioid crisis that has claimed thousands of lives in recent years – more needs to be done to support youth who have a substance use disorder.

Complexity is nothing new to FSGV. The youth who access Directions Youth Services programs may be unhoused for any number of reasons – often multiple and interconnected ones – such as abuse or neglect at home, mental health challenges, substance use disorders, past or current trauma, discrimination, lack of cultural connection, and transitioning out of Ministry care with limited financial or social supports.

For many youth, home is not a safe space in which to detox, and we believe young people should have access to low-barrier resources that go beyond detox. Through outreach and a service delivery model that emphasizes wrap-around supports, FSGV has built relationships with youth to become a trusted place to turn to when they experience crisis.

FSGV is well positioned to help identify gaps and address the needs of at-risk youth, shaping the future of addictions treatment and comprehensive wrap-around supports that best serve the complex needs of this population. We look forward to working alongside youth who are struggling with substance use, our staff, our research colleagues, as well as our funding and government partners to expand responsible, evidence-based services and ensure that youth have safe choices for detox support.

Our commitment to building relationships and supporting youth who are substance users is unwavering. Whether in the 24/7 Directions Drop-In Centre and Shelter program, through its outreach team or within the low-barrier emergency Directions Youth Haven and Directions Youth Safehouse, FSGV will continue to provide harm-reduction supplies and information, trauma-informed and client-centered supports, and substance-use referrals to at-risk youth.



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