

Alberta's Virtual Opioid Dependency Program:  
Dr. Nathaniel Day

# Alberta's VODP and Supports for Police Services



Healthy Albertans.  
Healthy Communities.  
**Together.**



## Alberta's Virtual Opioid Dependency Program

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AHS VODP

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Recognition: Health Standards Organization 2021 Leading National  
Practice

Health Quality Council of Alberta 2020 Patient Experience Award





# What Is VODP?

1-844-383-7688

## Alberta's Virtual Opioid Dependency Program

### **VODP: a public and entirely virtual OAT provider in Alberta.**

- Leverage existing technologies such as telehealth, videoconference (ZOOM), telephone and text to connect providers to clients;
- Rapid access to treatment medications anywhere in Alberta.

### **Key Elements:**

- All encounters are virtual;
- Clients **do not need a referral**, but often come from corrections, emergency departments, detox or other settings. Self referred most common;
- Once stabilized, transition clients to services in own community (if they exist);
- Provide ongoing care when local services absent.

### **Methodology: Service Model of Care:**

- Every door the right door “How can we help you today”;
- Start treatment now! Sort out where we are going later (anything is safer than fentanyl);
- Same Day Starts / Transition Services / Low Barrier Care / Ongoing Care.

## Alberta's Virtual Opioid Dependency Program

Any Alberta Resident can Access VODP 7 Days per Week, 0800 to 2000h by calling 1-844-383-7688

Same Day Start Team

Transitions Team

Low Barrier Care Team

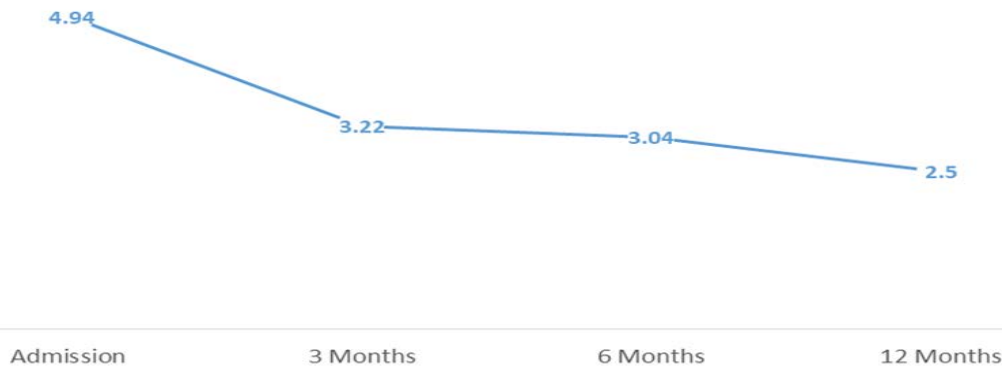
Ongoing Care Teams

# VODP Results:

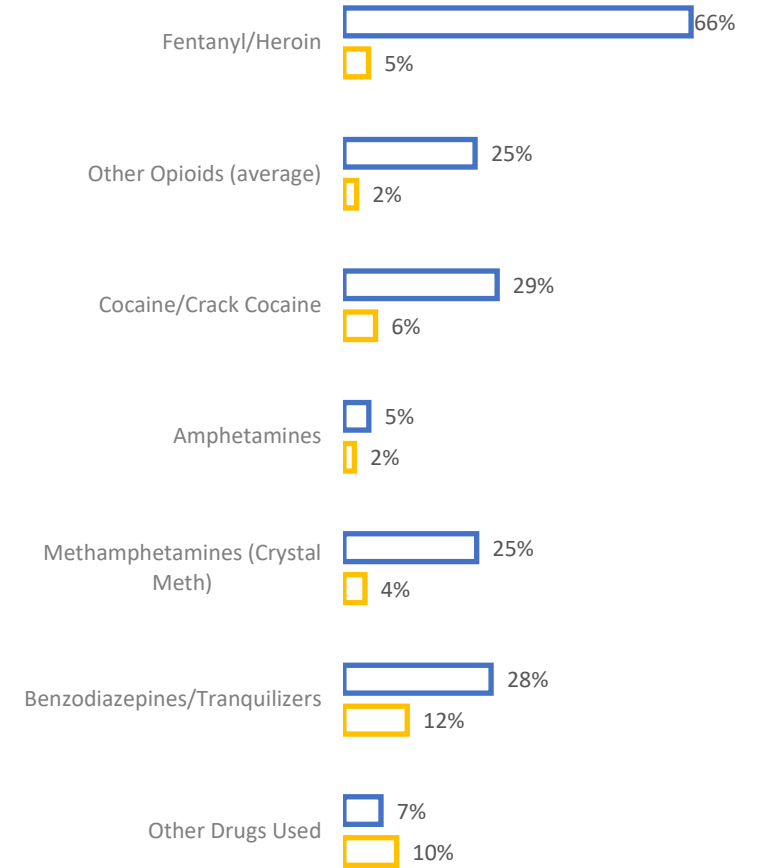
*Poly-Drug Use Scale (methadone removed)*



**Social Function (BTOM)**



**Admission vs 12 Months 2017-2020**



# Why Support People in Police Detention?

- People who are picked up on new charges or warrants are going into withdrawal in police custody
- Withdrawal is extremely uncomfortable and creates a powerful need in the person to find drug to relieve their withdrawal.
- The longer the withdrawal experience extends, the more likely the person is to overdose when they resume their usual dose, or worse yet, take an extra “bump” because they feel so bad.
- Treatment medications quickly and effectively improve or resolve withdrawal symptoms, even if only used short term.
- Introduction of treatment medications to a person who is using opioids gives them options to consider going forward, including the option of ongoing lifechanging treatment.

## Walkthrough of How it Works:

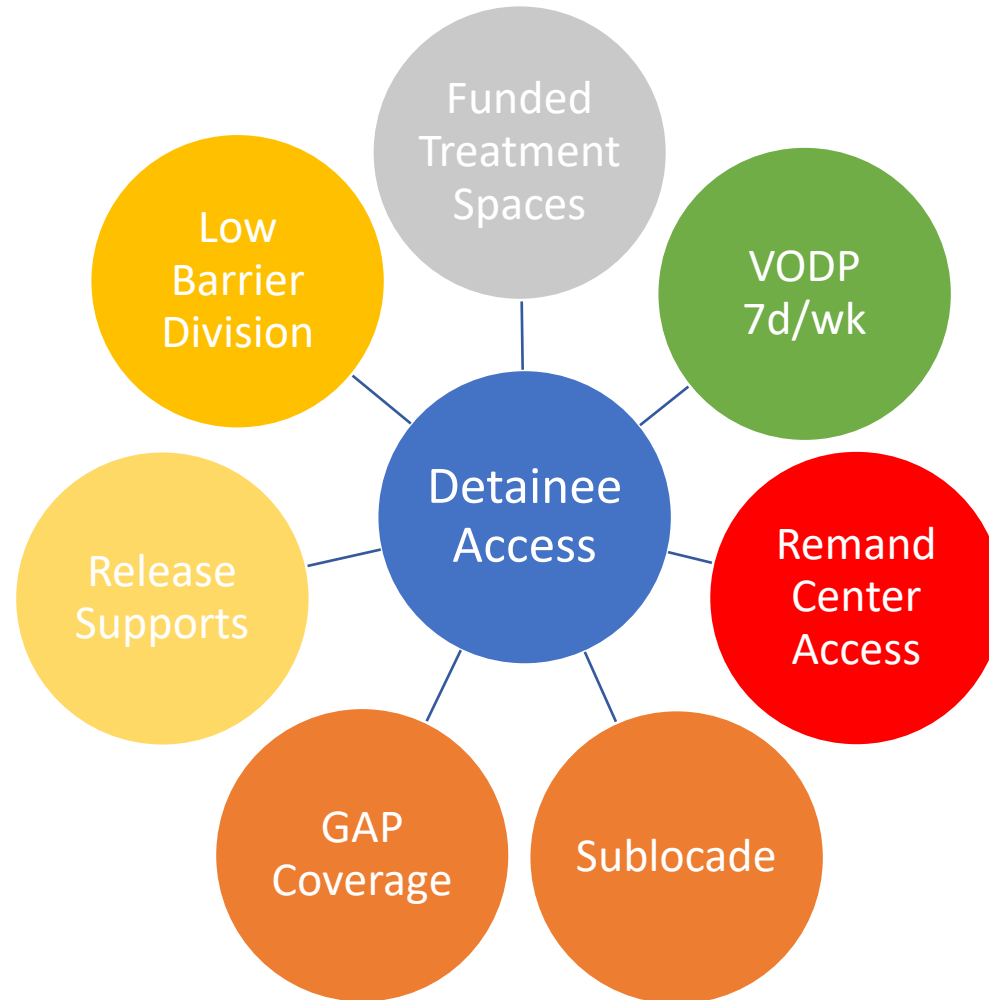
1. Detainee arrives at the unit and has their usual medical screen with a member of the paramedic team.
2. Detainee is informed by the paramedic that if they use opioids and are worried about withdrawal or are interested in starting treatment to let them know so that they can facilitate a consultation with VODP.
3. Detainee, decides then or later, if they want to try treatment. If they choose to do that, the paramedic does a withdrawal assessment and calls the program.
4. VODP professional staff take the call and speak with the detainee in a phone booth, which is private and confidential, the same as if they were speaking with a lawyer. Our healthcare staff collect needed information, provide education and confirm information using tools like Alberta's Netcare System.



## Walkthrough of How it Works:

5. VODP's prescriber then reviews the information and calls the detainee back. We have streamlined this so that most often the detainee is still in the phone booth to receive the call. The prescriber reviews information, discusses treatment options, discusses follow up options and determines the most appropriate management.
6. Prescriptions are sent to a local pharmacy where the medications are packaged and sent to the unit with instructions. Instructions are also sent directly to the paramedic.
7. The paramedic and client then follow the expert guidance to successfully start treatment. VODP staff and physicians remain available for updates or questions that might arise.

## Alberta's Virtual Opioid Dependency Program





Alberta's VODP

Working Together  
to Safely and  
Compassionately  
Offer Solutions  
that Relieve  
Suffering and  
Improve  
Outcomes.

Alberta's Virtual Opioid Dependency Program

# Questions?

Toll Free 1-844-383-7688  
7 Days per week 0800 to 2000h



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