

COVID-19 News

Province commits \$10M to support sexual assault victims amid the COVID-19 pandemic

[Victor Kaiser](#)

May 26, 2020 12:16 pm



The B.C. Government will provide \$10-million in grant funding to support sexual assault victims in the province amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The money, which will last for three years, will be administered by the Ending Violence Association of BC (EVAABC) and its Executive Director Tracy Porteous calls today 'an historic day.'

"It is a day where we collectively take another bold step towards breaking the silence on sexual violence," she said. "It is a day where we reintroduce and expand lifelines and emergency networks to a crime that strikes at the heart of the very dignity and humanity of too many individuals in our province."

The government says the money will help organizations deliver culturally appropriate services that meets the needs of survivors across the province.

"Sexual assault and other violent crimes can have devastating and long lasting effects and the safety of women and children and all British Columbians is a priority for myself and this government," said Public Safety Minister, Mike Farnworth, in announcing the funding.

"This grant program will help organizations throughout the province provide sexual assault survivors with swift access to compassionate and comprehensive care."

Porteous went on to call sexual violence 'an invisible epidemic.'

"In its wake, sexual violent leaves terror and humiliation and panic and nightmares and distrust and depression," she added. "These injuries caused to survivors may not always be visible to most people, but I can tell you they are all too real, and without help, they can last a lifetime."

Porteous says it too early to say how much of an impact COVID-19 will have in terms of sexual assault and gender-based violence. But she says organizations are bracing for an onslaught of victims looking for help.

"The service providers on the front lines what they're most worried about is a tsunami for demand for their help that will happen once the lockdown is fully lifted," Porteous noted.

B.C.'s Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity Mitzi Dean says sexual assault can strike at the heart of a person's sense of safety and autonomy, causing lifelong trauma if people don't have access to supports.

"I've worked supporting people who have faced violence for most of my career and I know first-hand that it's essential for people who have been sexually assaulted to have the services they need when they need them," Dean noted.

Farnworth says government is working to get the criteria for the funding in place, noting organizations will then be able to apply for the money.

Like 2 Tweet

Search...

