

The Cheque Day Study Community Impact Statement

SHORT SUMMARY

SPLIT
& STAGGERED

SYNCHRONIZED
MONTHLY

STAGGERED

Once a month people receiving income assistance in British Columbia receive their payment all on the same day. Every month there are sharp spikes in individual and community-wide harm around payments including riskier drug use, overdoses, hospital admissions and violence. The Cheque Day Study is looking at whether changing the timing and frequency of income assistance might reduce drug use and related harm.

Alongside the Cheque Day Study, we undertook a broad consultation process with stakeholders across the province to better understand the potential community impacts of changing income assistance payment schedules. We compiled what we heard into a **Community Impact Statement** to accompany the scientific results of the study. This short summary accompanies the full report which can be found at bccsu.ca/Cheque-day-Study along with more information about the study.

Key considerations from the report



Values that recipients would like to be enshrined in the income assistance system include **dignity, autonomy, and equality**.



Changes must ensure **consistent and equal access** to income assistance regardless of individual drug use patterns.



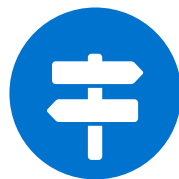
Support services may need to adapt to meet client needs across the month, which may mean changes to operating hours, staffing, service provision and/or resources.



The potential for **increased vulnerability** if payments are desynchronized requires careful consideration and potential supports.



Low rates of income assistance may exacerbate the problem. Many people shared how poverty and desperation contribute to the amount of substance use around cheque day.



Budgeting might become easier for some or more difficult for others depending on individual financial management practices. Highlighting opportunities for **tailored support, individualized services** and **choice** in how income assistance is paid.



Concerns exist amongst community members and service providers alike regarding the **logistics of administration, adapting to new payment schedules, and the payment of rent and bills**.

View the full report at bccsu.ca/Cheque-Day-Study for:

- More detail about potential impacts of changing the way income assistance is paid
- Accounts of what cheque day is like for community, first responders and service providers
- Perspectives on alternative payment systems

