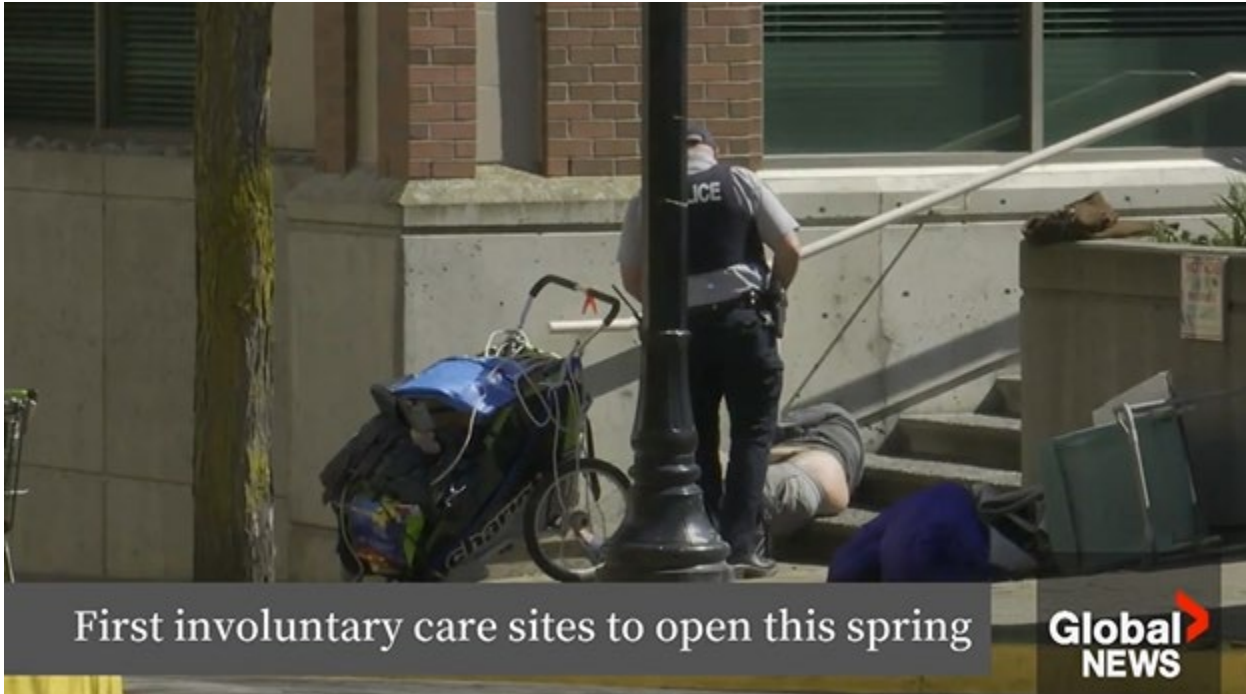


## B.C. ‘full speed ahead’ on involuntary care, aims to open 2 facilities by spring

By [Simon Little](#) & [Alissa Thibault](#) | Posted January 7, 2025 6:44 pm



Premier David Eby says the government is on track to open two secure “involuntary care” sites by the spring.

The use of [involuntary care](#) to treat people with severe [mental health](#), brain injury and addiction problems was among Eby’s key campaign promises to address growing concerns about repeat offenders and public safety.

Speaking Tuesday, Eby said facilities at the Surrey Pretrial Centre and at the Alouette Correctional Facility in Maple Ridge will be the first such centres to come online.

“These are modest size facilities considering the demand and the need that is out there,” he said. “However, they are the template for a significant expansion of this work.”

The Eby government hired Dr. Daniel Vigo as the province’s first chief scientific adviser for psychiatry, toxic drugs and brain injury last summer. Opening the new facilities is a part of Vigo’s mandate, with a goal to have them running by May.

“We are full speed ahead on that project,” Eby said.

The Surrey Pretrial Centre will be home to 10 beds for people who require treatment while in a correctional facility, while secure housing will be offered at the Alouette facility.

Advocates in the mental health sector say that while there is a place for involuntary treatment, it must be used carefully — and that many questions remain.

“Involuntary care can be necessary as a last resort, but it shouldn’t be our main solution,” said Jonny Morris, CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association’s B.C. Division.



“It really does beg the question of have we really, truly looked as to whether this kind of care works, and are the safeguards, assurances around quality, protection of people’s rights, are those things fully in place?”

Morris said the government has explained the clinical profile of who the facilities will apply to, but has yet to clarify who, in practice, will end up in them.

The Ministry of Health estimates there are about 2,500 people in B.C. living with a mental health and substance use disorder along with an acquired brain injury.

Morris added that there are other critical unanswered questions about oversight of the system and protections for patients, given that they will face an “absolute suspension of liberties and rights.”

And he argued the system will do little to help without a corresponding increase in mental health supports available in the community to people who actually want them.

“We hear every day from people who are trying to seek out voluntary care from the system, and actually seeking to be admitted, who have a hard time staying admitted and receiving quality care,” Morris said.

The province’s timeline to open additional involuntary care facilities remains unclear.