

Alberni -Clayoquot Regional Hospital District

February 11 2026

Dr. Charmaine Enns
Medical Health Officer



Territorial Acknowledgement

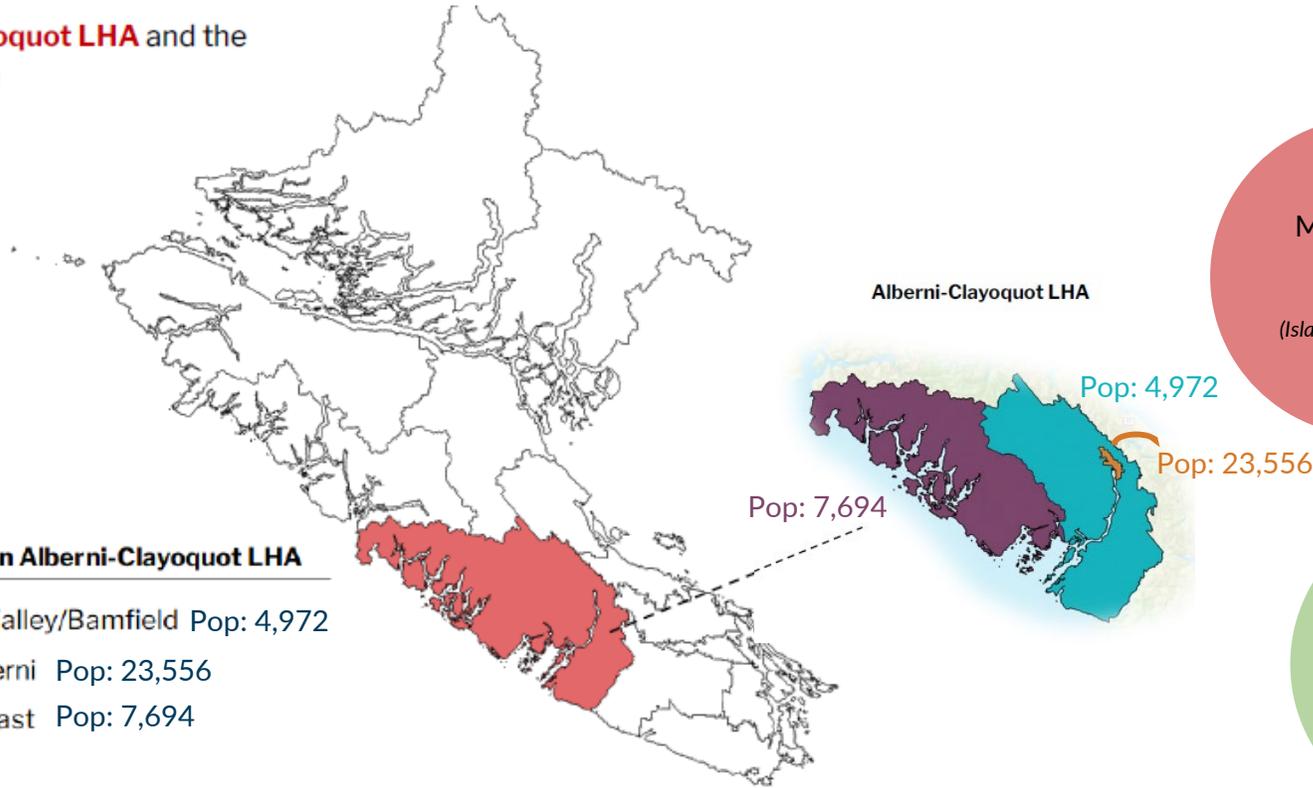
We respectfully acknowledge the unceded traditional territory of the Tseshaht, Hupacasath First Nations, and the traditional keepers of their land. With humility, we commit to walk softly on this land, and to work together to uphold the determination and health of the Indigenous peoples and communities we serve.



The Nuu-chah-nulth Whaling Canoe Sculpture at Victoria Quay honours the seafaring traditions of the Tseshaht and Hupacasath peoples.

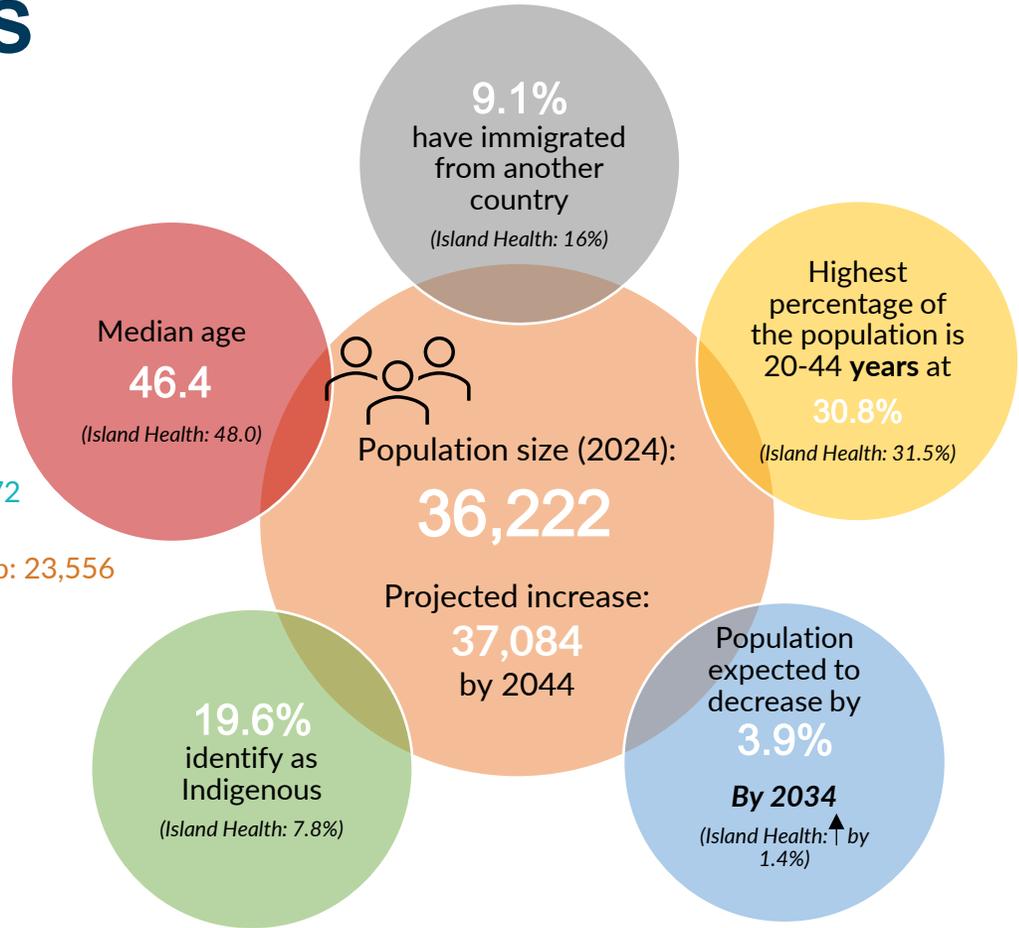
Alberni Clayoquot LHA Population Demographics

Alberni-Clayoquot LHA and the CHSAs within



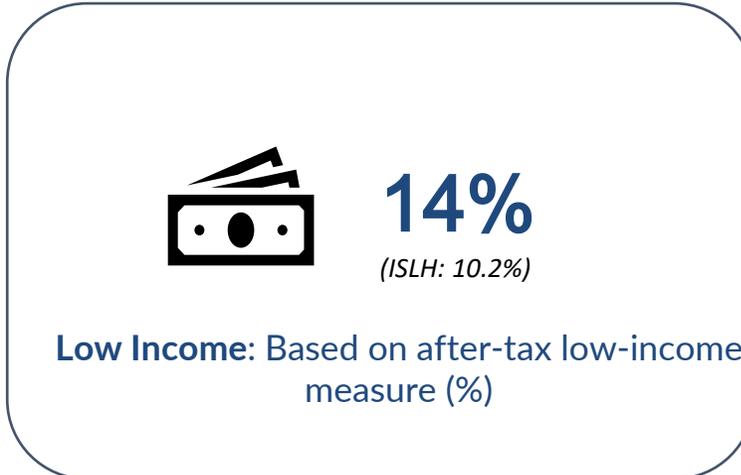
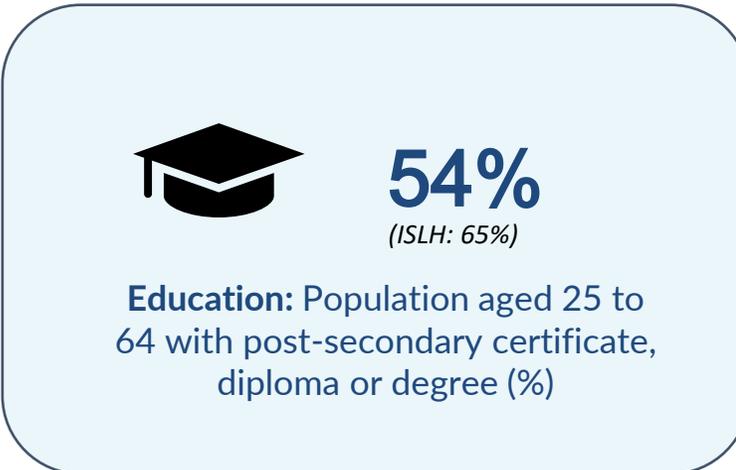
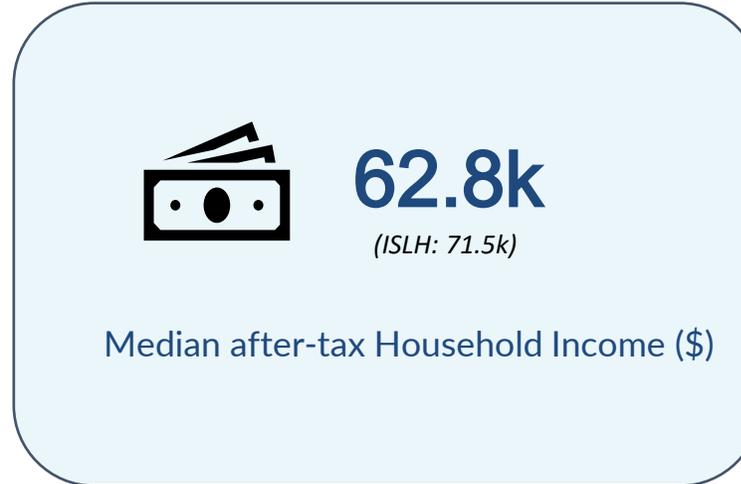
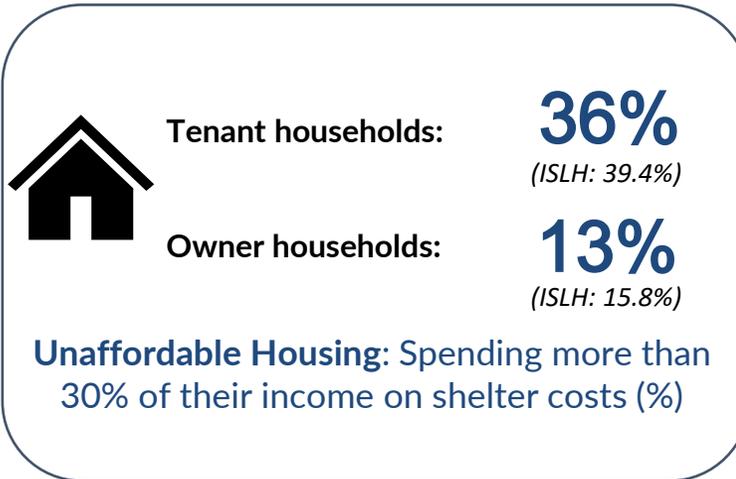
CHSAs within Alberni-Clayoquot LHA

- Alberni Valley/Bamfield Pop: 4,972
- Port Alberni Pop: 23,556
- West Coast Pop: 7,694



Socio - Economic Factors

Alberni Clayoquot LHA



Best Start in Life

Best Start in Life

Income and Housing

Alberni/Clayoquot LHA

Children and youth who live in households with lower income report poorer mental health outcomes.

(in 2021)

18%

Children and youth (age 0 to 17) living in private households with low income.

↑ Higher than Island Health (11%).

19%

Live in one-parent households

↑ Higher than Island Health (15%).

Large disparity in household income for one-parent vs two-parent homes.

Median income after tax

Couple households with children

\$ \$103,000k

↓ Lower than Island Health: 118k

One-parent families

\$56,800k

↓ Lower than Island Health: 62.8k



(in 2020)



One-parent households are more likely to struggle financially.

Best Start in Life

Perinatal

Infant mortality is a key indicator of child health and societal well-being.

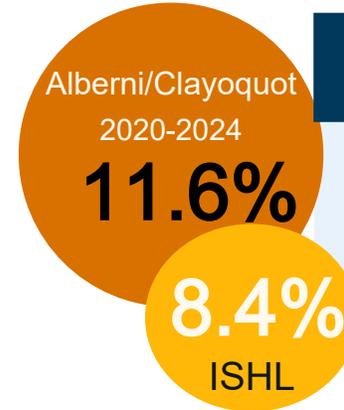
Infant mortality rates in Alberni Clayoquot have seen **sustained elevated rates** compared to Island Health



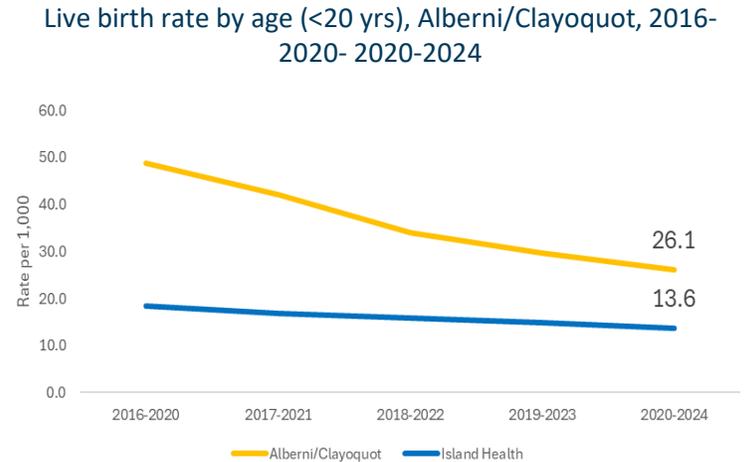
Premature Births

Prematurity poses a greater risk for health problems and is the leading cause of infant mortality

Of births within Alberni/Clayoquot were born **premature (below 37 weeks)**.

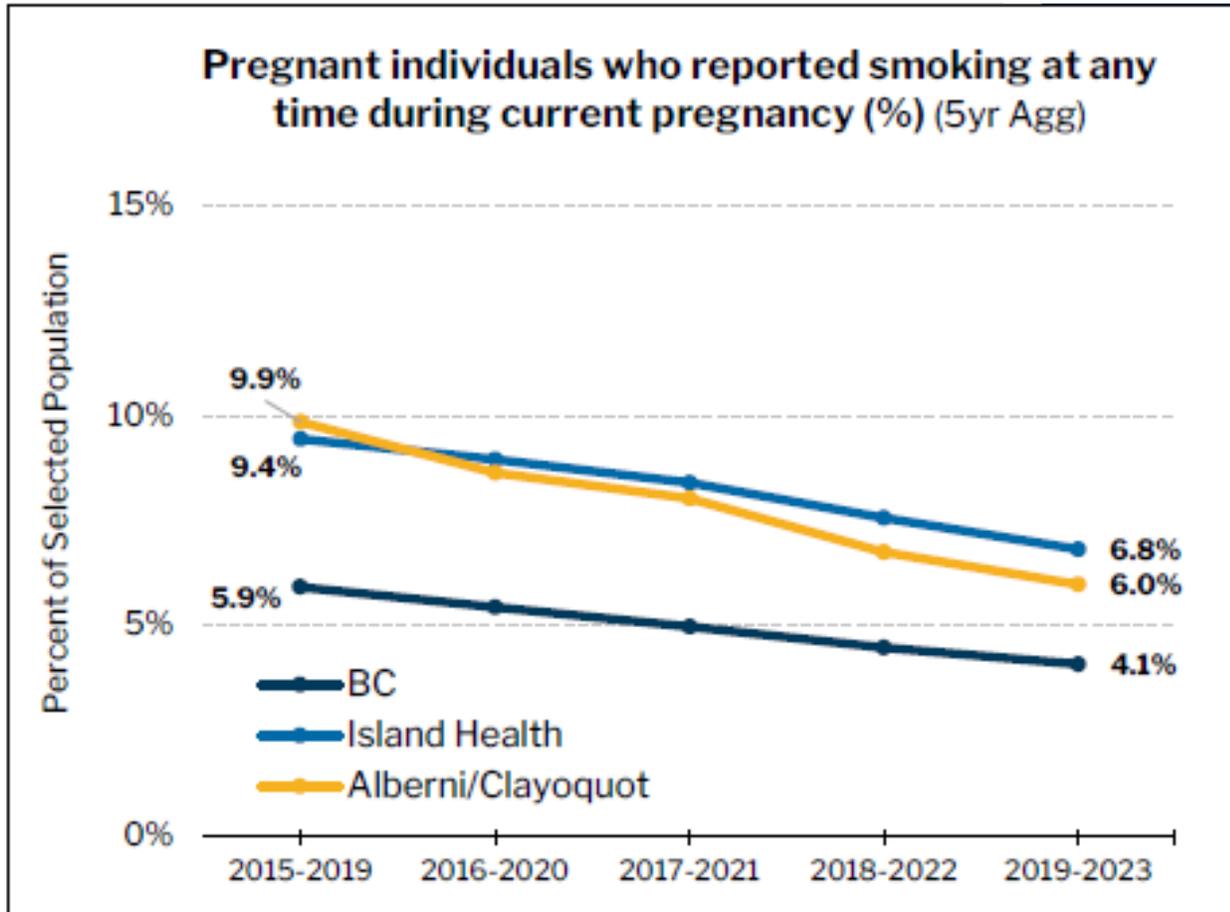


Live birth rate to birthing parents <20 years of age has been declining but is **2x higher than Island Health** in 2020-2024.



Smoking during Pregnancy

Alberni Clayoquot LHA



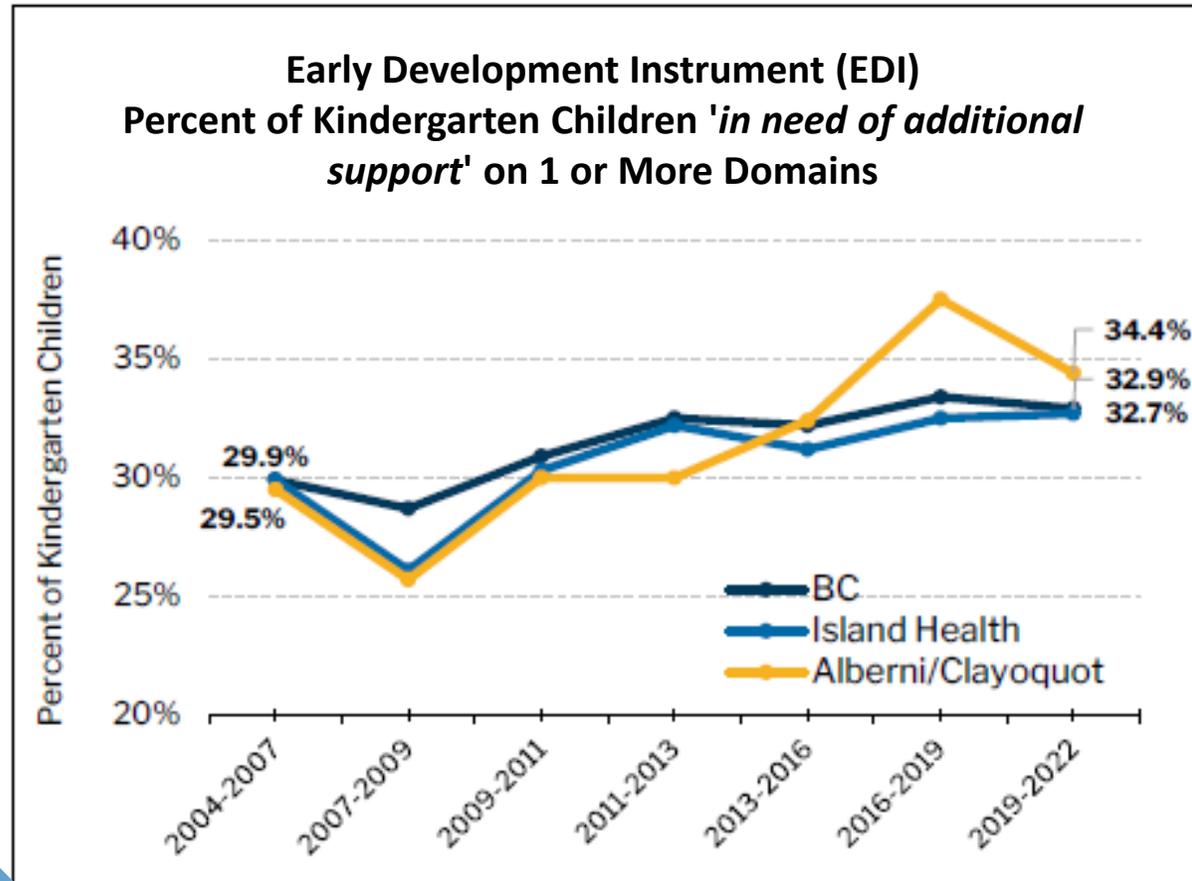
Lower proportion of pregnant individuals **smoke during pregnancy** in Alberni Clayoquot than Island Health



Child and Youth

Early Childhood Development

Alberni Clayoquot LHA



Domains

- Physical Health & Well-being
- Social Competence
- Emotional Maturity
- Language & Cognitive Development
- Communication Skills & General Knowledge

"Care and experiences in early childhood lay critical foundations for the entire life course"

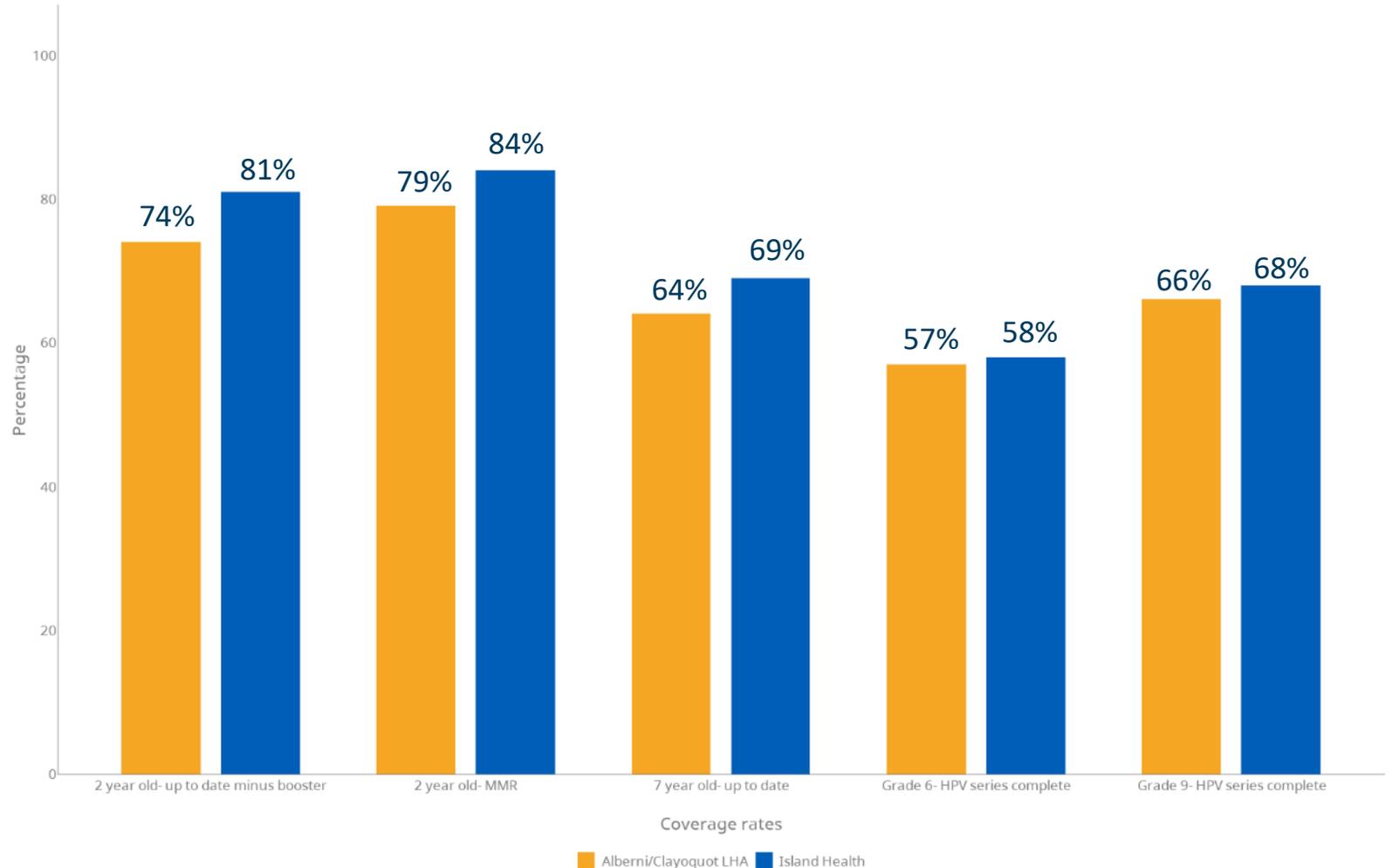
(WHO, 2020)

Immunization rates

2025*

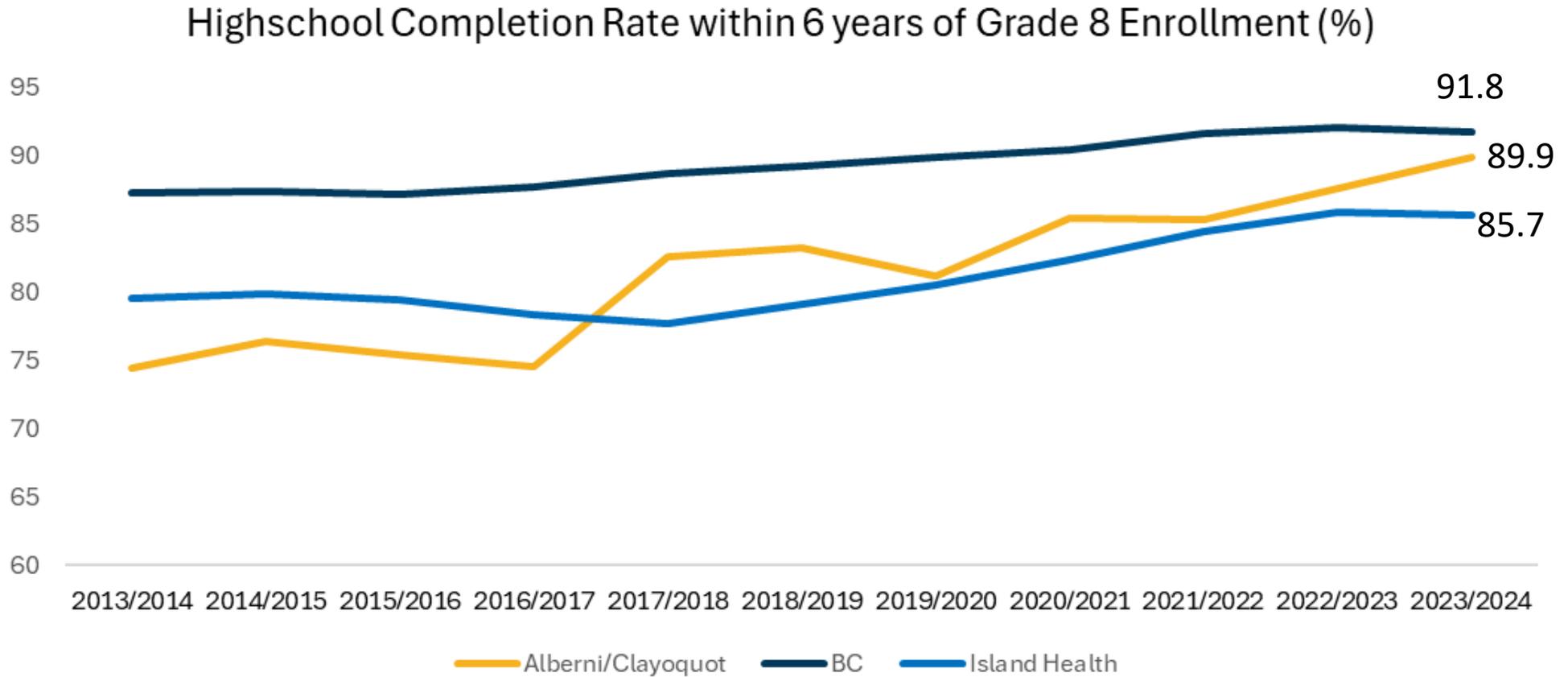
Immunization coverage rates in Alberni/Clayoquot LHA are lower than Island Health overall, but are most similar for the **grade 6 and grade 9 HPV completed series (2024/25)**

*Up until Dec 19th, 2025 for childhood vaccines



High School Completion Rate

Alberni Clayoquot LHA



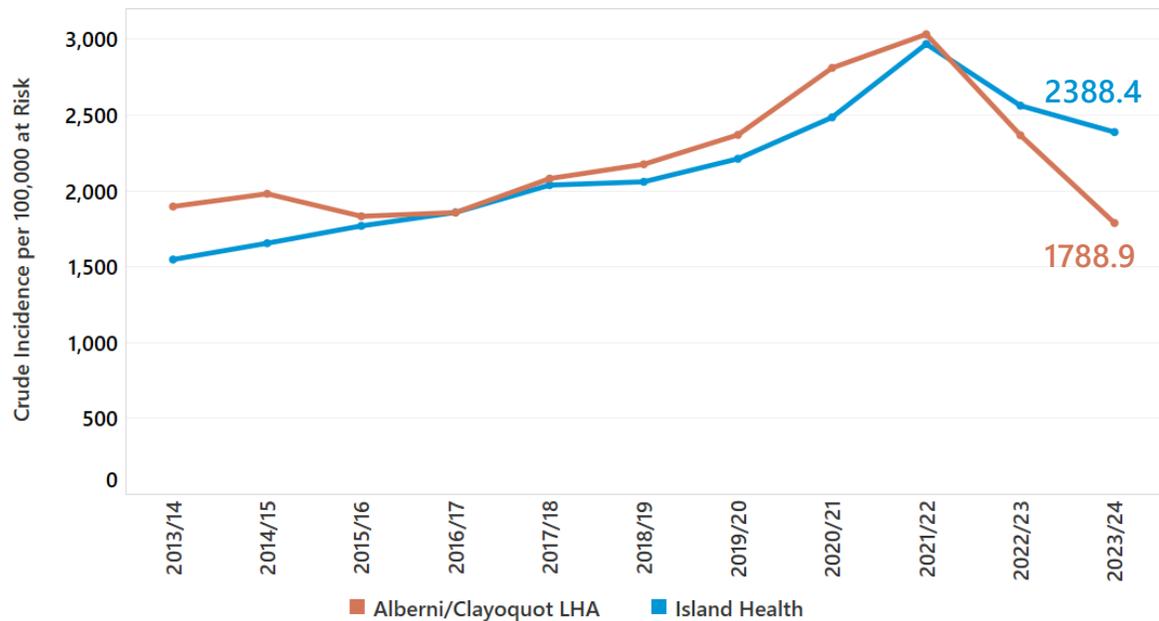
Youth Mental Health & Substance Use

Youth Mental Health

Alberni/Clayoquot LHA

Incidence of Mood & Anxiety Disorders in Youth (1-19 years)

Alberni/Clayoquot LHA, 2013/14-2023/24, Rate per 100,000



Case Definition:

One or more hospitalizations with a mood or anxiety disorder diagnostic code, OR
Two or more medical visits with a mood or anxiety disorder diagnostic code within one year.



Incidence of mood and anxiety disorders has been trending downward since 2021/22.

Incidence in young females was 2.5 times greater than for young males (2023/24).

McCreary, Self-Reported Mental Health, SD 70

Grade 8-12, 2023

56% of all students rated their mental health **good to excellent**

64% felt their life was going well

50% felt good about themselves

69% could name something they were good at



Early Childhood Development

District 70: Pacific Rim

Positive childhood experiences **buffer the effects** of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)



Youth Substance Use

District 70: Pacific Rim

Students grade 8-12

Alcohol

45% Had ever drunk alcohol

Same as Island health overall (45%)

Of those who ever tried alcohol,

42% Had tried alcohol by the age of 13

35% Reported having at least 5 drinks within a couple of hours in the last 1- 5 days

Tobacco

22% Had ever smoked tobacco

Higher than Island health overall (20%)

Of those who ever tried tobacco,

54% Had first smoked tobacco by the age of 13 or 14

31% Had used tobacco 1-5 days in the last 30 days

Cannabis

27% Had ever tried cannabis

Same as Island health overall (28%)

Of those who ever tried cannabis,

45% Had tried cannabis by the age 13

30% Had used cannabis 1-5 days in the last 30 days

Youth Substance Use

District 70: Pacific Rim

Students grade 8-12

Vaping

33%

Had ever vaped

Higher than Island health overall (30%)

Of those who vaped,

56%

Had tried vaping by
the age of 13

Of those who vaped daily,

72%

vaped within 30
minutes of waking up

Key messages

- Vaping in youth can lead to changes in the **brain** and **nicotine use disorder**
- Vaping in and around schools can begin to **normalize** the behaviour for youth
- **Grades 7-9** are the key years for vaping initiation
- Vaping within 30 minutes of waking indicates youth are **NOT vaping for social reasons**

Youth Gambling in Canada



1 in 3 young adults (18-29 yrs old) reported **online gambling**

Of those who reported online gambling,

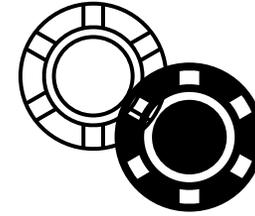
23.5%

Reported experiencing a **high level of gambling-related harms**, including reduction of savings, increased credit card debt and compromised wellbeing.

69.4%

Met the criteria for **problem gambling**

Youth Gambling



35%

Of students
(Grade 8-12)

Gambled for money in **Central Vancouver Island HSDA**

Similar to BC (34%)

11%

Gambled for something of value other than money in **SD 70 Pacific Rim**

Lower than Central Vancouver Island HSDA (13%)

30%

Gambled just for fun in **SD 70 Pacific Rim**

Lower than Central Vancouver Island HSDA (34%)

Gambling for things other than money can sometimes lead to gambling for money

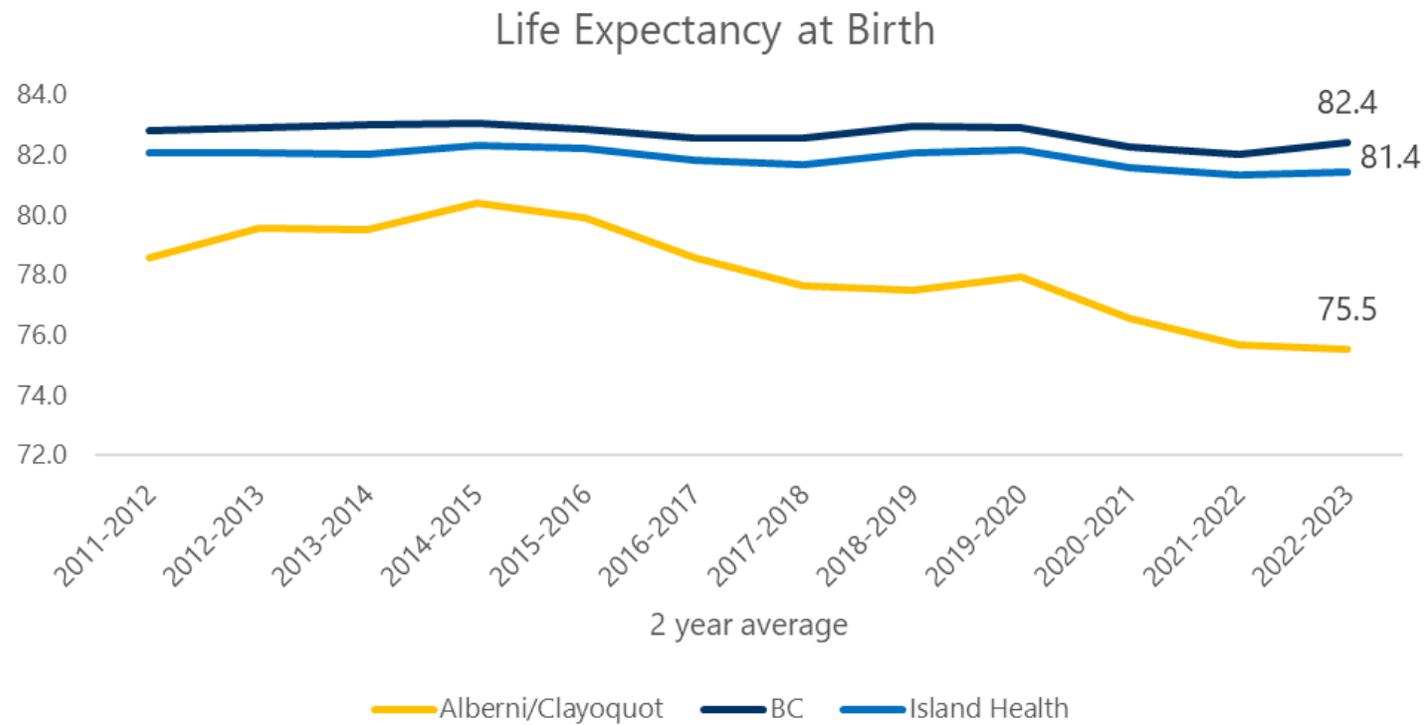


Among BC Youth

Males were more likely to have engaged in gambling activities for money in the past year (47% vs. 29% of non-binary youth vs. 20% of females)

General Population

Life Expectancy at Birth



↓ Life expectancy from birth compared to other regions.

Local Health Area	Life Expectancy
Saanich Peninsula	84.0
Western Communities	83.5
Southern Gulf Islands	83.2
Oceanside	82.8
Greater Victoria	81.9
Comox Valley	81.4
Cowichan Valley North	80.6
Cowichan Valley South	80.4
Greater Nanaimo	80.3
Greater Campbell River	79.5
Cowichan Valley West	77.6
Vancouver Island North	75.5
Alberni/Clayoquot	75.5
Vancouver Island West	

The life expectancy at birth in Alberni/Clayoquot has been **trending** ↓ and is ↓ than Island Health and BC



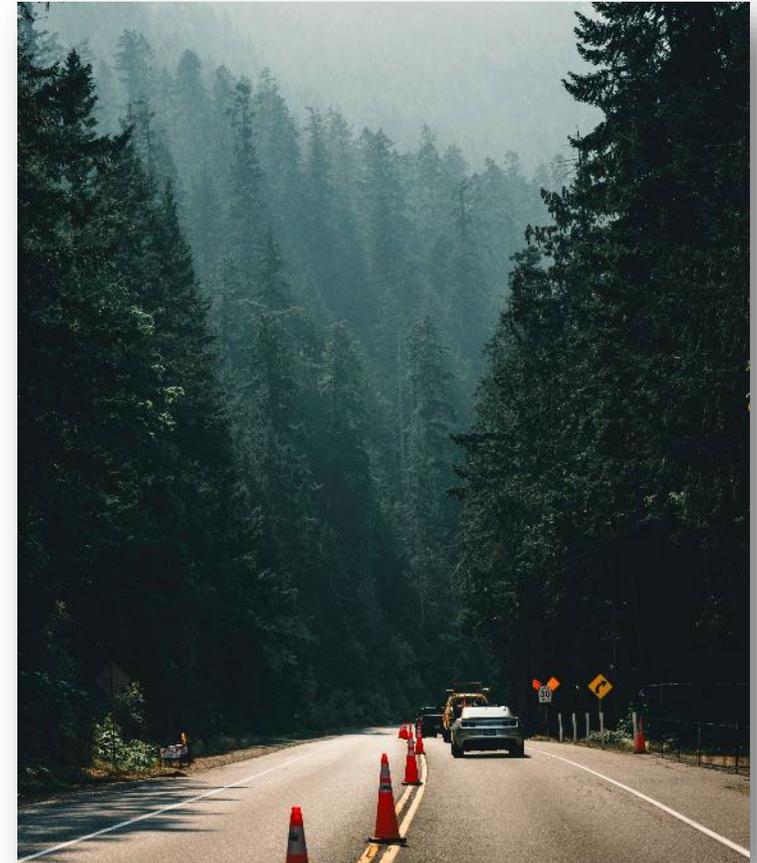
Potential Years of Life Lost (PYLL)

Potential years of life lost, or PYLL, is a measure of premature mortality.

It estimates the additional time a person would have lived had they not died prematurely (before 75).

Select PYLL in Alberni Clayoquot LHA compared to BC in 2019-2023:

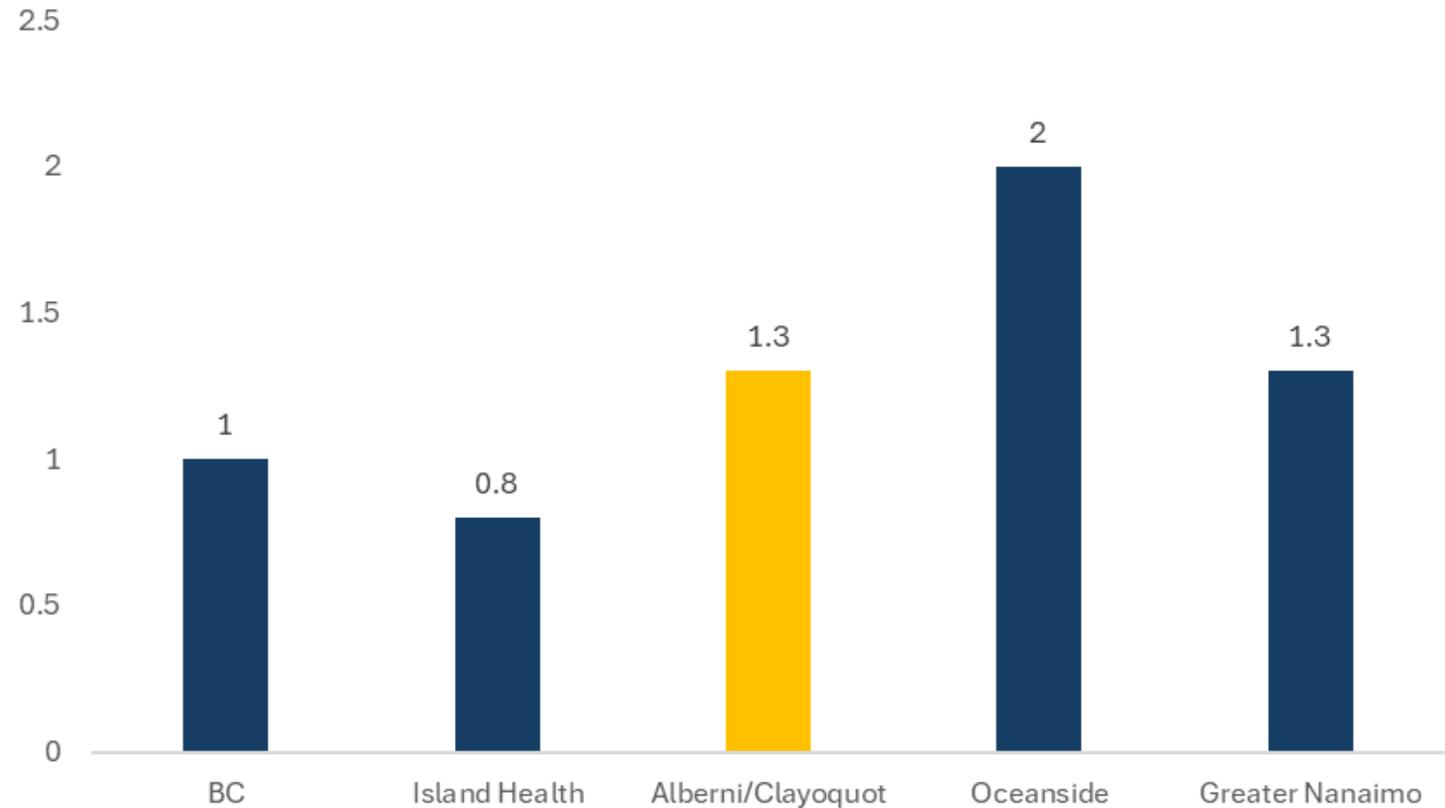
- 2.8x  deaths related to alcohol
- 1.9x  deaths related to accidental injuries
- 1.2x  deaths related to self harm/suicide
- 1.3x  deaths related to motor vehicle



Motor Vehicle Incidents

Potential Years of Life Lost rate, 2019-2023

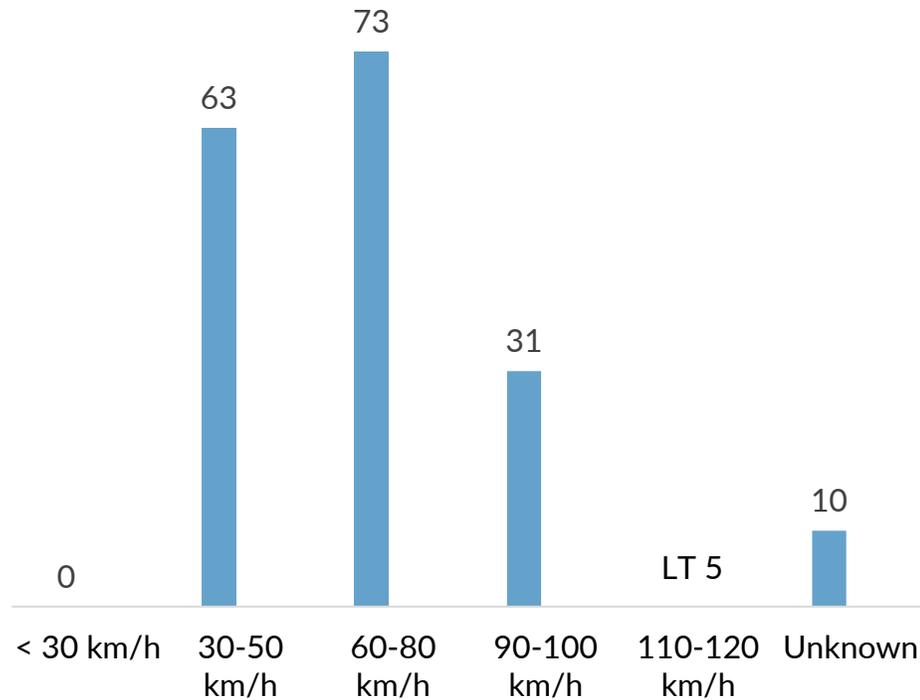
- The Potential Years of Life Lost rate in Alberni Clayoquot is **1.6 times higher** than Island Health



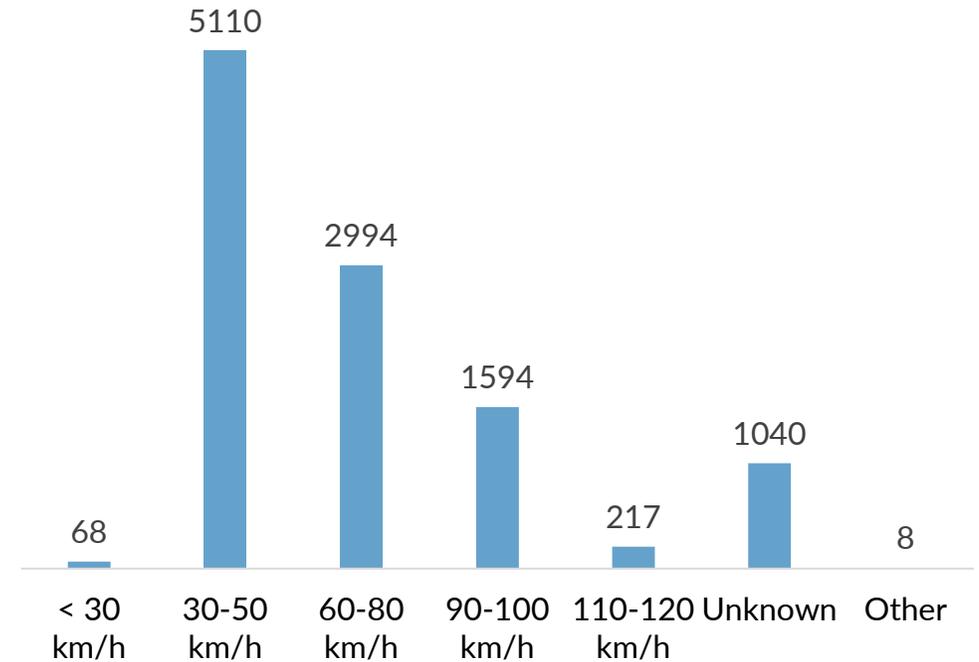
Motor Vehicle Incidents

Deaths and Injuries by Speed Zone, Central Vancouver Island HSDA, 2014-2023

Number of deaths



Number of injuries



LT 5 = Less than 5 cases

Motor Vehicle Incidents

Estimation of casualty crashes within or outside municipal boundaries, 2020-2024

	Number of ICBC casualty crashes with street/road location	Number of crashes outside municipal boundaries	Number of crashes within municipal boundaries	Percentage of crashes within municipal boundary
Port Alberni	881	289	592	67%
Tofino	97	42	55	57%
Ucluelet	81	57	24	30%

Estimated 314 casualty crashes occurred on Highway 4, 89% of which were outside municipal boundaries

Common crash sites outside of municipal boundaries included Sproat Lake, Beaver Creek & Cherry Creek

Within municipal boundary = Crashes with specific street/road description data or highway crash at an intersection without road location

Alcohol Consumption (Drinks/Week) per Capita in 2024



British Columbia



9.7

Island Health



12.2

Alberni/Clayoquot



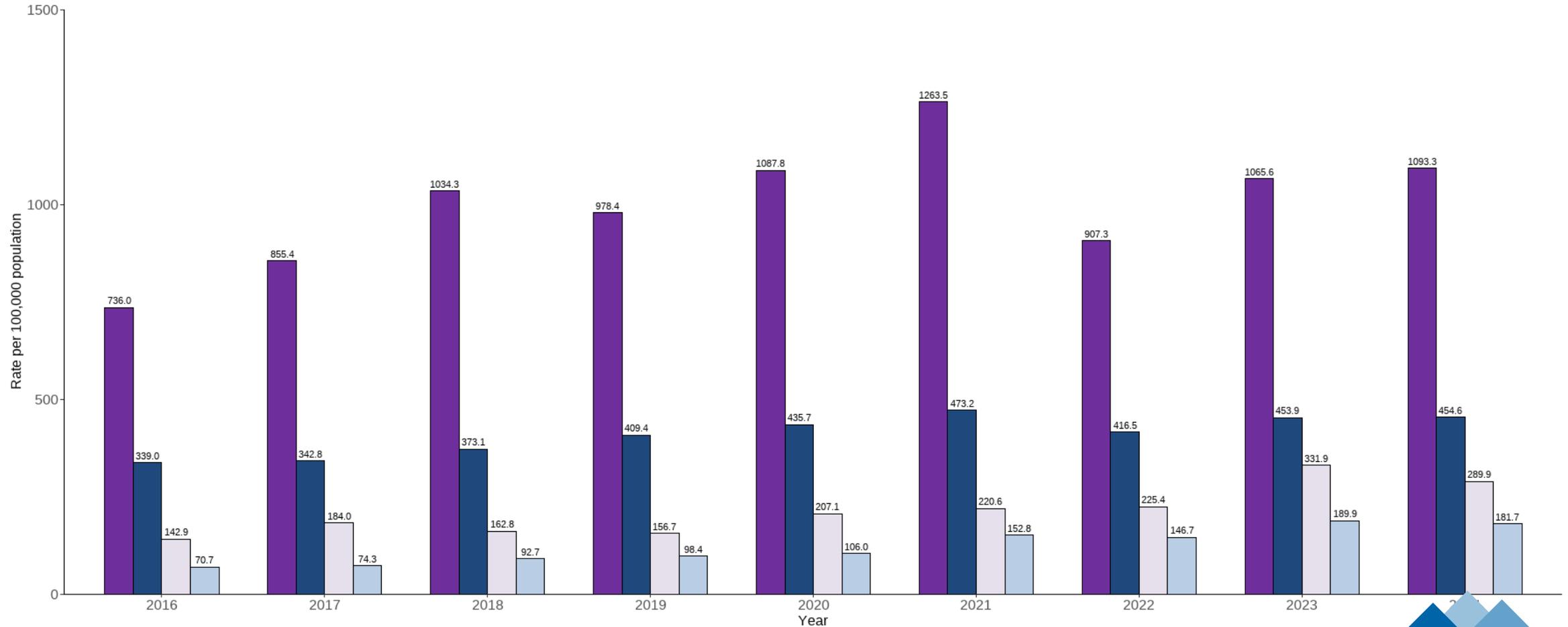
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Hospital Admissions Linked to Alcohol and Opioids

Rate of Opioid and Alcohol Hospital Admissions Alberni-Clayoquot LHA Residents, 2016-2024

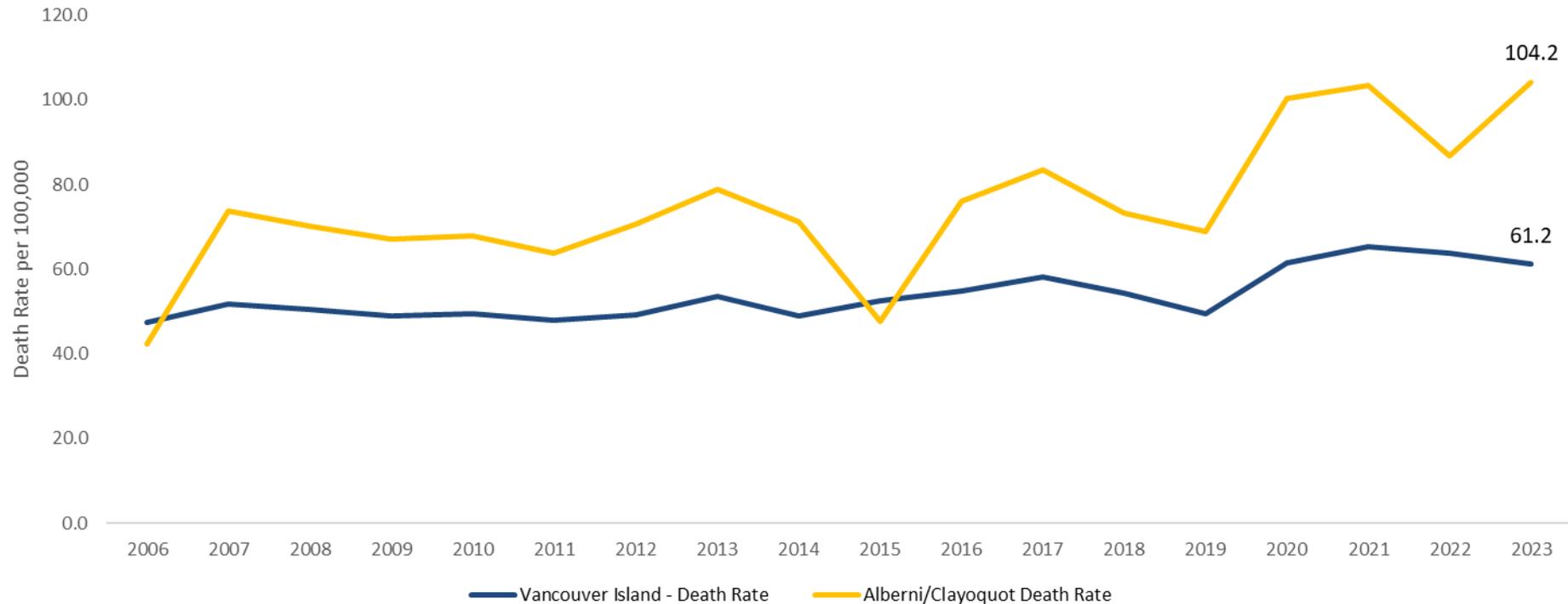
Data up to December 31, 2024. 'Rest of ISLH' excludes Alberni-Clayoquot LHA residents.

Substance ■ Alberni-Clayoquot - Alcohol ■ Rest of ISLH - Alcohol ■ Alberni-Clayoquot - Opioids ■ Rest of ISLH - Opioids



Alcohol Outcomes

Death Rate (per 100,000), wholly or partially attributed to alcohol, Alberni/Clayoquot and Island Health, 2006-2023

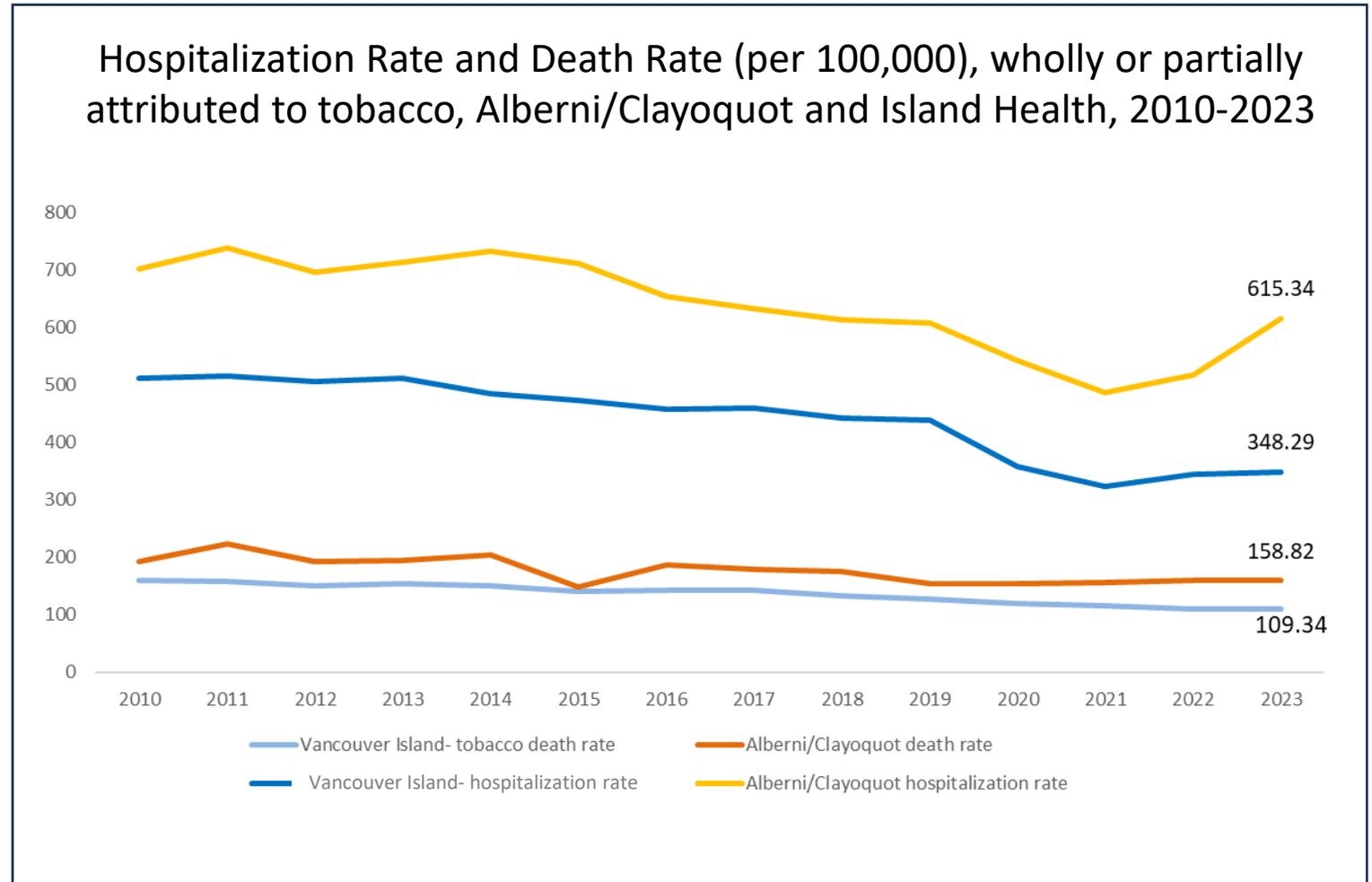
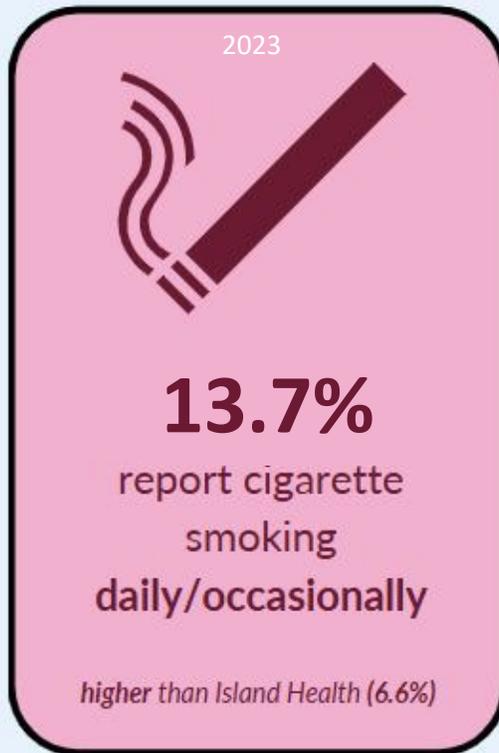


The death rate attributed to alcohol **has been increasing** and is **higher** than Island Health.



Tobacco Use & Outcomes

Alberni/Clayoquot LHA



Drownings & Coastal Injuries

8

fatal drownings, on average, occur each year in the Central Vancouver Island HSDA (BC Coroner Services, 2024).

34%

of non-fatal drowning hospitalizations and emergency department visits identified in a 2020-24 Island Health chart review occurred in the Central VI HSDA.

43%

of visitor safety incidents in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve's Long Beach Unit are due to coastal activities including swimming, surfing, beach recreation (CBT Vital Signs, 2023).

70%

of Central Vancouver Island youth reported being a confident swimmer. Males were more likely to report being a confident swimmer (e.g., 74% vs 68% of females) (Casey et al., 2024)

Drownings & Coastal Injuries

Tofino Surf Lifesaving Club



- Community-led initiative established in March 2025 in response to ongoing coastal injuries and safety incidents, and the absence of supervised beaches on the West Coast

68 members—nearly half certified in First Aid/CPR, surf lifesaving, and/or lifeguarding

Summer 2025: 16 engagement sessions at Cox Bay Beach resulting in 151 interactions with 285 beachgoers

On average, one coastal incident requiring rescue or first aid occurred every 2-3 engagement sessions

Food Security

Average monthly cost of healthy eating
for a family of four

(in 2022)

\$1,366

In Island Health



\$1,343

In Central Vancouver
Island

Food costs were highest in South Vancouver Island (\$1,386)

SD 70 – Pacific Rim

42%

(2023/2024)

Grade 12

Felt hungry because there was **not enough** food to eat.

~10%

(2023)

Grade 8-12

Youth went to bed hungry at least sometimes.

Food Insecurity affects overall health and stress for youth.



Nearly 1 in 5

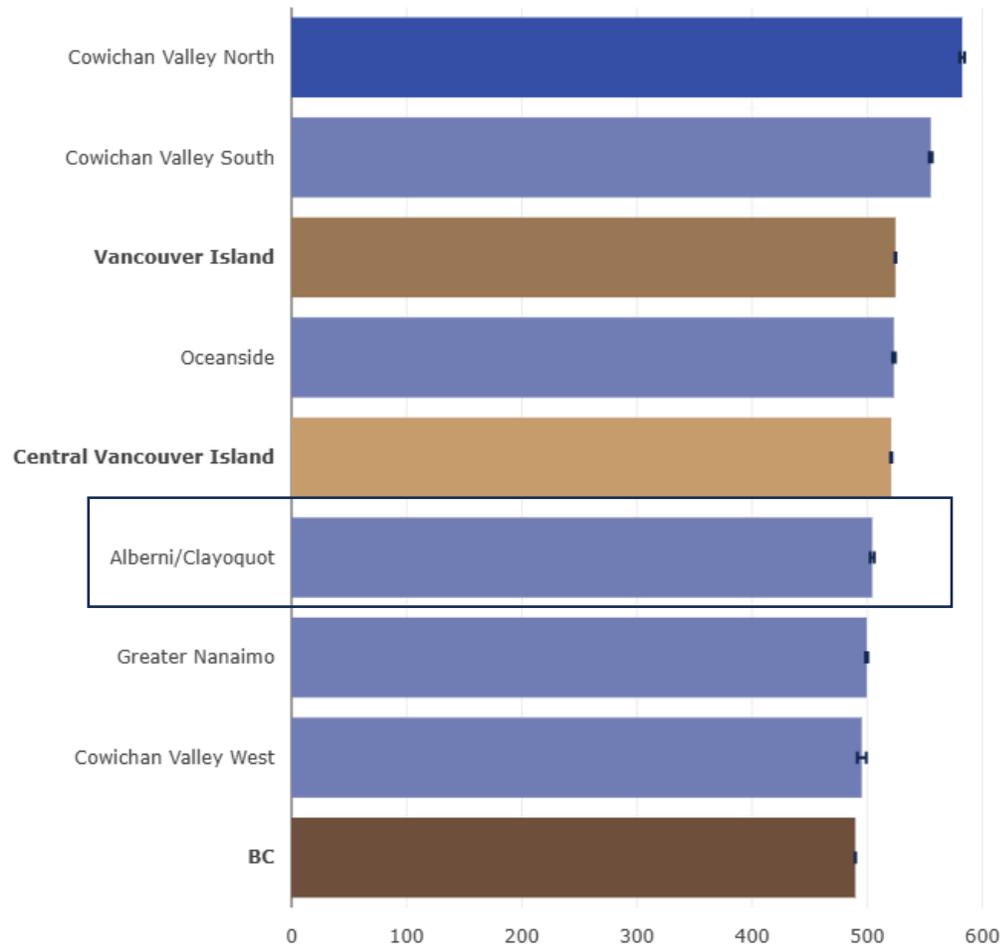
Adults were concerned about food security in the past 12 months

(2023)
In Alberni/
Clayoquot LHA

Cancer

Age-Standardized Incidence Ratio (ASIR), by Central Island LHAs, 2022

ASIR of All Cancers cancer, All by LHA, Vancouver Island, 2022



Island Health, 2023

Most common cancer types



- Prostate
- Lung
- Breast
- Colorectal

Combined they account for nearly half of all cancer diagnoses

Top causes of cancer death

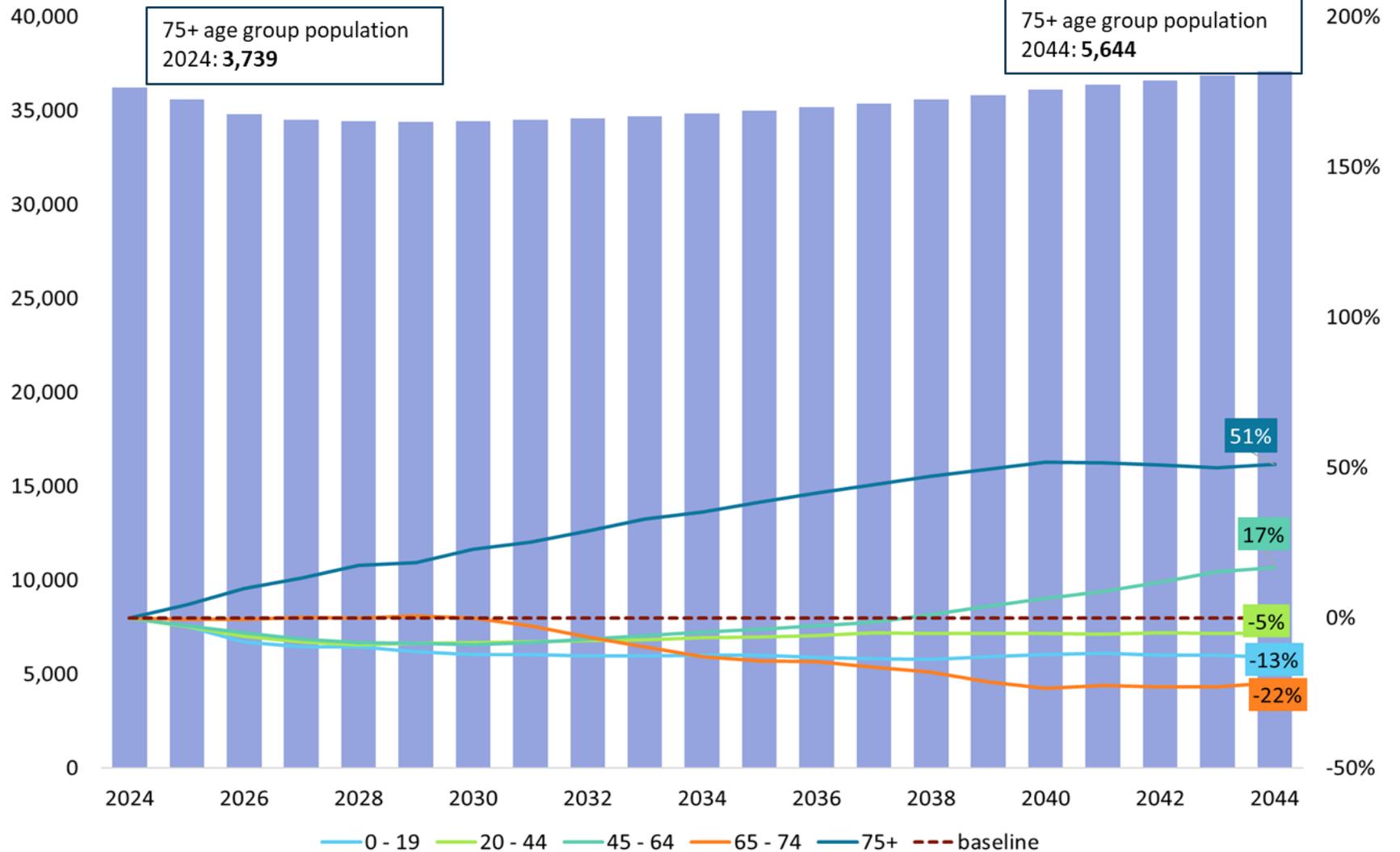


- Lung
- Colorectal
- Breast
- Pancreas

Combined they account for nearly half of all cancer deaths

Seniors

Population Projections by Age Group for Alberni Clayoquot (2024-2044)



75+ age group population
2024: 3,739

75+ age group population
2044: 5,644

↑ The 75+ age group is expected to grow by 51% by 2044.

The 45-64 age group is expected to grow by 17% by 2044.



Socio - Economic Factors (Seniors)

Central Vancouver Island HSDA



41%
(ISLH: 43%)

Of those aged 75+ reported **very good or excellent general health**



60%
(ISLH: 63%)

Aged 75+ reported **strong community belonging**



8%
(ISLH: 6%)

Food insecurity 75+: You worry that food will run out before you can buy more

(ISLH: all age groups 19%)

Alberni/Clayoquot LHA



14%
(ISLH: 12%)

Low Income 65+: Based on after-tax low-income measure (%)

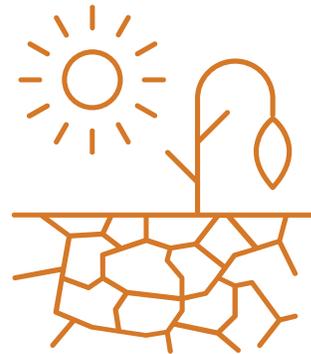
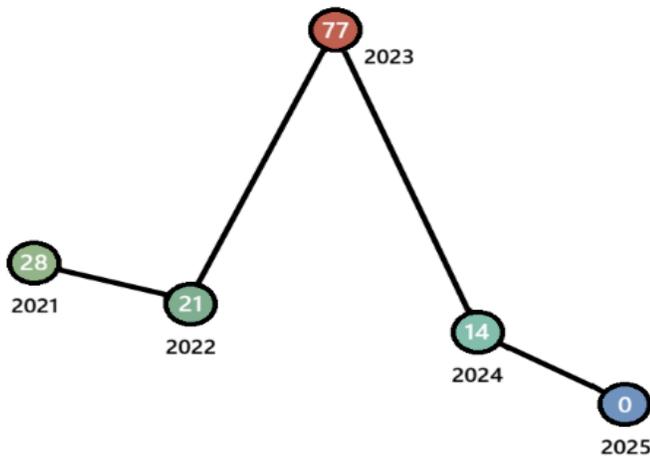
Climate Change & Environmental Health

Drought & Air Quality

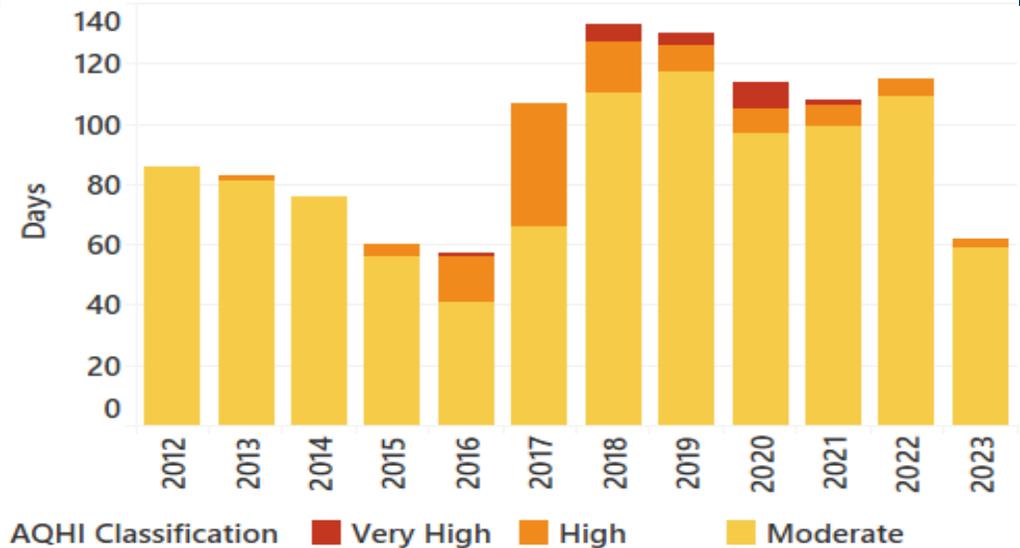
More frequent and severe droughts are expected across Island Health.

Since 2021, Island Health basins were among the driest of BC's 52 basins.

Annual Days of Level 5 Drought*



Days with Poor Air Quality by Year and AQHI Classification
Island Health, 2012-2023



Poor air quality results from multiple sources. Although the highest AQHI levels are typically associated with summer wildfire events, poor air quality is more frequent through the winter months, partly due to emissions from residential woodstove use.

* Level 5 is the highest rating on the provincial drought scale

Key Messages

- Some socio-economic indicators are improving, showing encouraging trends.
- Decreasing and lower life expectancy is driven by preventable factors. This trajectory can be reversed.
- Psychoactive substance related harms are high, especially related to alcohol. Alcohol related harms are directly related to consumption.
- Supporting early childhood development lays the groundwork for lifelong health and wellbeing, helping prevent negative health outcomes later in life.

Data Resources & Reports

1. [BC Survey on Population Experiences, Action, and Knowledge \(SPEAK\)](#)
2. [Chronic Disease Dashboard](#)
3. [BC Alcohol & Other Drug Analyzer Tool](#)
4. [Island Health 2024 Chief Medical Health Officer Report: *Change and Challenge: A Public Health Response to Our Perplexing Relationship with Psychoactive Substances*](#)
5. [2023 Adolescent Health Survey Reports](#)
6. [Early Development Instrument](#)





Get in Touch

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Thank you.