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Kanna Hayashi

**MEDIA RELEASE**

# SFU professor Kanna Hayashi named the St. Paul's Hospital Chair in Substance Use Research

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**Photos:** <http://get.sfu.ca/aynMbT>

Simon Fraser University (SFU), St. Paul's Foundation, the B.C. Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU), and the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (BC-CfE) have announced Kanna Hayashi, PhD as the inaugural St. Paul's Hospital Chair in Substance Use Research.

The endowed chair, appointed by SFU in the Faculty of Health Sciences, is supported by a \$1.5 million contribution from St. Paul's Foundation in support of the BCCSU, and further funding from SFU. Additional initial funding was provided by St. Paul's Foundation and the BC-CfE.

Hayashi, an SFU professor, is an internationally recognized substance-use epidemiologist and a human-rights advocate for people who use drugs. She is also a research scientist at the BCCSU, and BC-CfE as well as an associate researcher at Vancouver Coastal Health.

As chair, Hayashi will take an active leadership and advocacy role locally, nationally and internationally to advance understanding in substance use. She will develop a research program in substance-use prevention, treatment and health policy. Hayashi will also work closely with existing networks including government, community, and clinical units to improve the integration of best practices and care across the continuum of substance use in B.C.

In collaboration with the Addiction Medicine program at St. Paul's Hospital, led by BCCSU director and physician Dr. Evan Wood, Hayashi will evaluate the effectiveness of existing opioid agonist therapies such as methadone and suboxone. She also plans to conduct clinical trials to identify a new medication to treat those who use both opioids and stimulants such as cocaine. Optimizing opioid agonist therapy options will ensure that more people will have access to treatments that effectively prevent withdrawal symptoms and reduce cravings for unregulated drugs such as fentanyl and heroin.

With researchers at SFU's Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addictions (CARMHA), led by SFU professor Will Small in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Hayashi will examine the relationship between substance use and mental health, and whether effective substance-use treatment can improve mental health conditions among people who use drugs. Many psychological symptoms such as depression and anxiety could be the result of substance use.

Hayashi holds a PhD from the University of British Columbia in interdisciplinary studies, as well as a master of international

affairs and a master of public health from Columbia University in New York.

Currently, she is a principal investigator of the [B.C. Centre on Substance Use's Vancouver Injection Drug Users Study \(VIDUS\)](#), a U.S. National Institutes of Health-funded prospective cohort study of more than 1,000 people who inject drugs in Vancouver.

VIDUS is one of the world's longest-running and largest cohort studies involving people who use drugs, and has been the basis of many policy-relevant research projects such as the evaluation of Vancouver's supervised injection site. Hayashi will build on this tradition and pinpoint gaps in substance use treatment, interventions and policies to improve the health of people who use drugs.

Since 2008, Hayashi has also led the [Mitsampan Community Research Project](#), a serial cross-sectional mixed-methods study to investigate drug-using behavior, healthcare access and other drug-related harm among people who inject drugs in Bangkok, Thailand.

#### **QUOTES:**

"This chair is an incredible opportunity to join a dynamic group of multidisciplinary scholars at St. Paul's Hospital and Simon Fraser University to respond to the challenges of substance use through a holistic framework. It is my hope to transform substance use treatment in B.C., improve the health and well-being of people who use drugs, and mentor students at SFU to advance B.C.'s research capacity in substance use."

—*Kanna Hayashi, St. Paul's Hospital Chair in Substance Use Research and Assistant Professor, Simon Fraser University*

"Dr. Hayashi's appointment supports SFU's mission to be Canada's 'engaged university' and our related goal of being a world leader in mobilizing knowledge for community benefit. This valuable partnership will advance research in substance use to improve care, reduce stigma and address a growing public health concern."

—*Andrew Petter, President and Vice-Chancellor, Simon Fraser University*

"As the opioid crisis has demonstrated, addictions and substance use have tragic consequences on our communities. The tragedies are not mere numbers – they are being faced by grieving parents, siblings, relatives and friends of those that have been lost and those that continue to struggle. We owe it to those suffering and to all British Columbians to be comprehensive and socially just in our response, and to do it in a manner that is grounded in evidence, research and knowledge translation. I am proud of all the partnering organizations' collective efforts in this initiative and look forward to hosting the new Chair at St. Paul's Hospital."

—*Dianne Doyle, President and CEO, Providence Health Care*

"On behalf of everyone who has helped bring about the new BC Centre on Substance Use, I'm extremely grateful to our partners for helping make this research chair in substance use possible. Dr. Hayashi is a world class scientist who will greatly enhance the research and teaching environment at SFU and help bring together SFU and UBC behind this new centre's efforts to modernize the province's approach to substance use."

—*Evan Wood, Director, BC Centre on Substance Use*

"Our donors are playing a key role in bringing to life a new model of care for those struggling with problematic substance use. With the work of the BCCSU and the new Chair, we have the unique opportunity to change the entire addiction medicine landscape in BC and around the world."

—*Dick Vollet, President and CEO, St. Paul's Foundation*

"It was Canadian research from this province and this community that led to the Insite victory at the Supreme Court of Canada and advanced human rights and health in this country. And it will be research based right here that will fight the overdose crisis devastating our community today."

—*Dean Wilson, longtime activist & past president, Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU)*

#### **ABOUT SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY:**

As Canada's engaged university, SFU is defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting-edge research and far-reaching community engagement. SFU was founded more than 50 years ago with a mission to be a different kind of university—to bring an interdisciplinary approach to learning, embrace bold initiatives, and engage with communities near and far. Today, SFU is Canada's leading comprehensive research university and is ranked one of the top universities in the world. With campuses in British Columbia's three largest cities – Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey – SFU has eight faculties, delivers almost 150 programs to over 35,000 students, and boasts more than 145,000 alumni in 130 countries around the world.

**ABOUT ST. PAUL'S FOUNDATION:**

St. Paul's Foundation raises funds to support inspired care, research, and teaching. St. Paul's is a treasured provincial health resource for all British Columbians, specializing in the care of people with heart and lung disease, HIV/AIDS, mental illness, renal disease and people living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. We integrate the best clinical care with real-world research and education, and provide care to our patients from across BC who made more than 500,000 visits last year. For more information, or to donate, visit [www.helpstpauls.com](http://www.helpstpauls.com).

**ABOUT THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN HIV/AIDS:**

The BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (BC-CfE) is Canada's largest HIV/AIDS research, treatment and education facility and is internationally recognized as an innovative world leader in combating HIV/AIDS and related diseases. BC-CfE is based at St. Paul's Hospital, Providence Health Care, a teaching hospital of the University of British Columbia. The BC-CfE works in close collaboration with key provincial stakeholders, including government, health authorities, health care providers, academics from other institutions, and the community to decrease the health burden of HIV and AIDS. By developing, monitoring and disseminating comprehensive research and treatment programs for HIV and related illnesses, the BC-CfE helps improve the health of British Columbians.

**ABOUT THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CENTRE ON SUBSTANCE USE:**

The BC Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) is a provincially-networked organization with a mandate to develop, help implement, and evaluate evidence-based approaches to substance use and addiction. BCCSU seeks to improve the integration of best practices and care across the continuum of responses to substance use disorders through the collaborative development of evidence-based policies, guidelines, and standards. With the support of the province of BC, BCCSU aims to transform substance use policies, programs and services by translating research into education and care guidance, thereby serving and improving the health of all British Columbians.

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