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At ANKORS, we believe in compassionate, community informed care that reduces harm and saves lives. This report highlights drug checking trends, regional activity, and fentanyl test strip distribution from April 2024 to March 2025. The data reflects not only numbers, but the people and partnerships behind each service provided

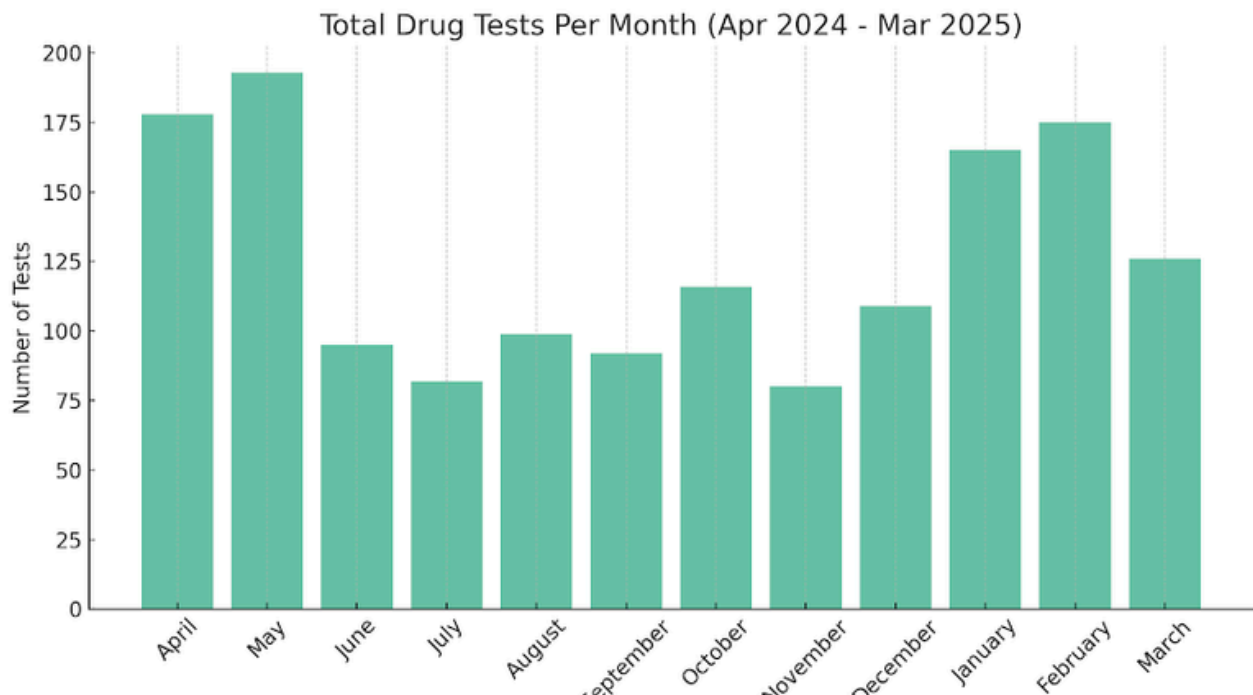
We continue to navigate shifting substance trends, seasonal barriers, and access challenges with a deep commitment to outreach, trust building, and education. Our goal remains clear: to meet people where they are at, and try to ensure everyone has access to tools that support safer use and informed choices.

As the landscape continues to change, we remain guided by the voices of who use our services. Their experiences shape how we respond, adapt, and advocate. By combining local data with lived realities, we're better equipped to spot gaps and push for meaningful support where it matters most.

Annual Test Totals

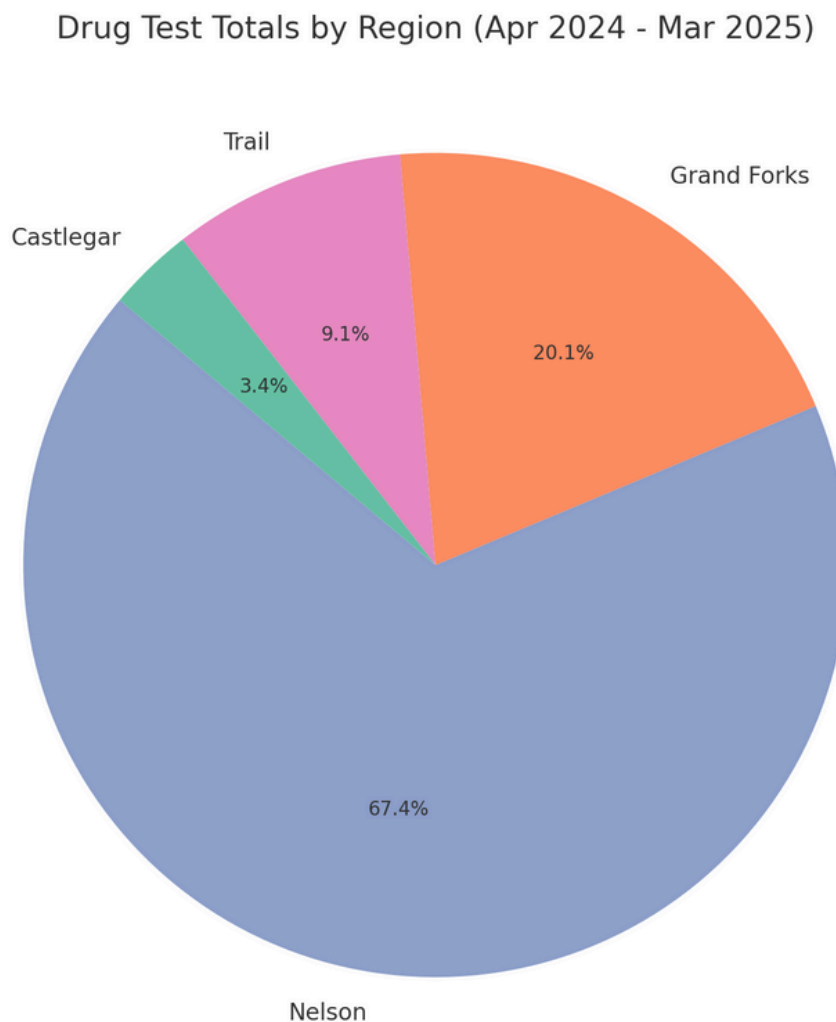
1087

Between April 2024 and March 2025, ANKORS West tested 1,087 samples. This reflects a 6.3% decrease from the previous year and an average of approximately 90.5 samples per month. May had the highest volume with 123 samples, followed by October with 116 samples



Annual Regional Test Totals

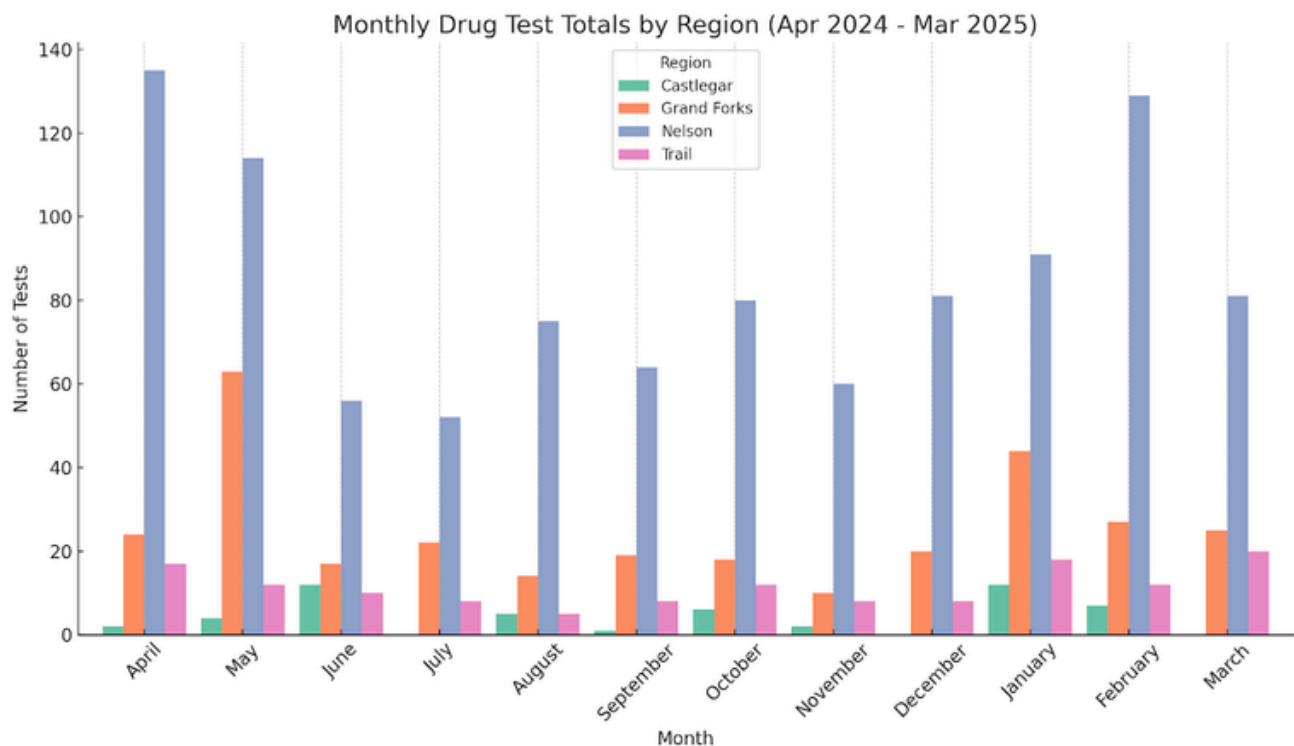
This chart shows drug checking activity by region from April 2024 to March 2025. Nelson had the highest engagement, while Trail, Castlegar, and Grand Forks offer opportunities to expand drug checking access and community education



Monthly testing by region

Fluctuations in regional numbers reflect both seasonal conditions and the logistical barriers of mobile outreach. Improving accessibility is key to connecting with clients in surrounding communities.

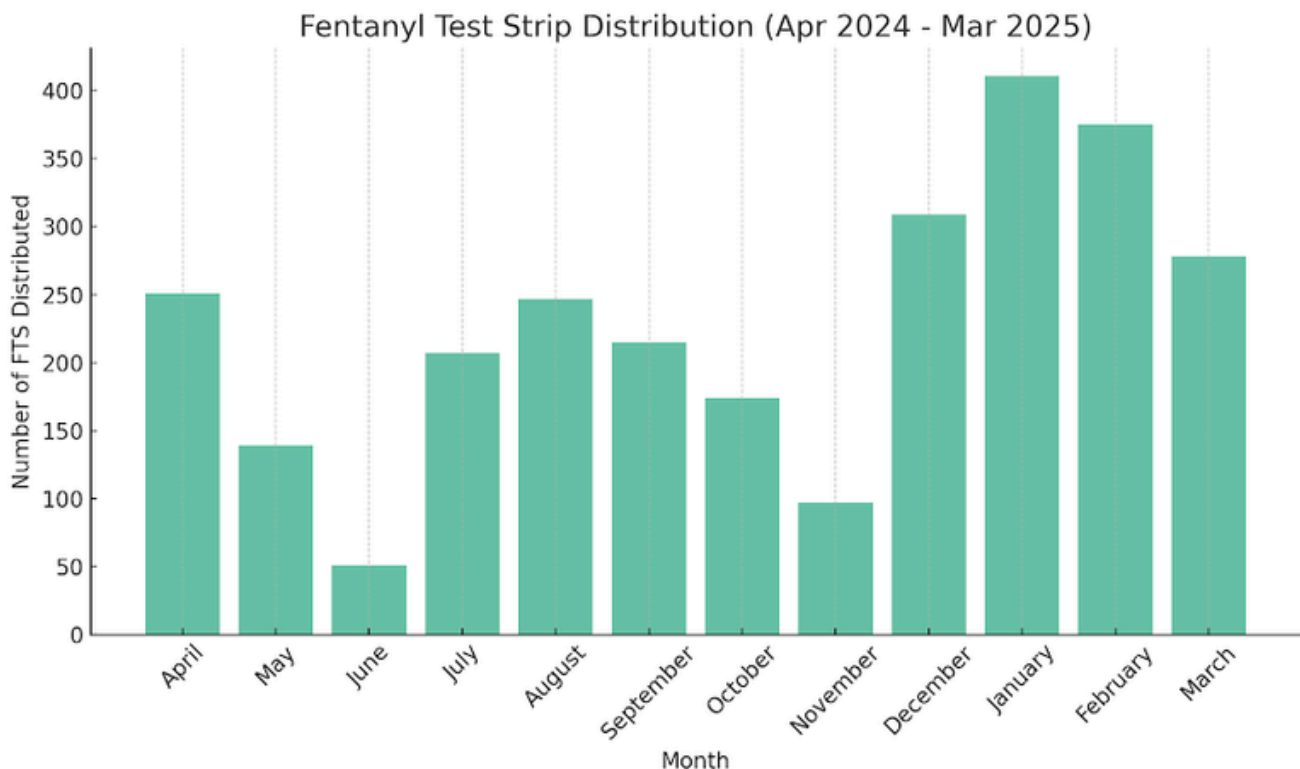
On going collaboration with local partners will help identify trusted spaces and increase engagement where its most needed. Expanding equitable access to drug checking is essential to supporting informed, community led harm reduction



Fentanyl Test Strips

2426

Between April 2024 and March 2025, a total of 2426 fentanyl test strips were distributed. This makes a 26.5% decrease from the previous year's total of 3,300. Ongoing efforts aim to identify barriers and guide strategies to improve reach and uptake.



Introduction & Program Transition

This past year brought a period of transition and learning for the ANKORS Drug Checking Program. In March 2025, I stepped into the role of Program Coordinator, following the thoughtful and dedicated leadership of Chris Kling. Chris's contributions to the program, from his clear communication style to his ability to adapt to an evolving supply, has laid a strong foundation that I'm both grateful to inherit and excited to build upon.

The transition has been smooth overall. I'm still finding my rhythm, learning the ins and outs of our equipment, documentation, and community relationships. I've been welcomed by a team that is positive, supportive, and deeply committed to the work we do.

Staffing & Scheduling Updates

This year saw some staffing changes. Both Chris Kling and Wade Swagar have moved on to new opportunities. With their departures, I am currently the only trained drug checker on staff. We are actively working toward training a second team member to ensure continuity of service and better coverage.

ANKORS has also adjusted its operational schedule. We are now open six days a week.

Drug checking services are currently available Monday through Thursday and every other Saturday.

Tuesdays and Wednesdays are mobile days, rotating through Grand Forks, Trail, and Castlegar.

There will be no drug checking available in the Nelson ANKORS office during Bass Coast and Shambhala 2025

Substance Trends & Observations

While I'm still fairly new to the role and cautious about making broad statements, I can speak to the continuation of some trends noted last year:

Benzodiazepines remain a near-constant presence in the unregulated opioid supply, often appearing in unpredictable combinations. Bromazolam, desalkylgidazepam, and flubromazepam are currently the most frequently detected benzos in fentanyl samples, though a wide variety of benzos continue to appear.

We're also continuing to see fentanyl analogues such as fluorofentanyl and ortho-methyl fentanyl, along with the detection of xylazine, though it appears to be more common in other parts of the province.

A newer concern is the emergence of medetomidine, a veterinary sedative similar to xylazine. It has begun appearing in other areas of BC but has not yet been detected in the Kootenay Boundary region. Its risks, particularly in combination with opioids or benzos are still not well understood and continue to be monitored closely.

We are also seeing more counterfeit pills circulating in the unregulated supply. These tablets often resemble prescription medications but may contain unexpected substances, including potent opioids or benzodiazepines.

This creates additional risk, especially for people who believe they are taking a known pharmaceutical. Drug checking can play an important role in clarifying contents and supporting informed decision-making.

Overall, the trend remains one of increasing variability and unpredictability, particularly in opioid samples. This makes it difficult for people who use substances to anticipate effects or manage risk, further underscoring the value of accessible drug checking.

Outreach, Engagement & Challenges

Outreach this year has primarily occurred through weekly community reports and alerts, as well as relationship-building with healthcare providers, outreach workers, and other community supports.

My goal is to expand our reach in the coming year; especially with youth, families, and professionals in education and healthcare settings. Efforts to re-engage youth through Freedom Quest have not yet gained traction, but I hope to reinvigorate these connections by offering info sessions in schools, parent support workshops, and other community-based education initiatives.

Staffing capacity remains a key limitation for expanding services or programming, but the vision is there — and I look forward to growing into it.

Looking Ahead

I'm still early in my journey with this role, but I bring a strong commitment to professionalism, community engagement, and mental health-informed care. My focus this year is on:

- Strengthening our program operations (clearer documentation, space organization, policy review)
- Expanding outreach and education, particularly among youth and service providers
- Continuing to build a strong, collaborative team
- Remaining attuned to the intersections of mental illness, substance use, and homelessness, which shape so much of what we see at ANKORS

I'm also actively developing my communication and engagement approach. Focusing on compassionate listening, collaborative decision-making, and building trust with individuals navigating complex realities and limited supports. This includes drawing on elements of the LEAP method (Listen, Empathize, Agree, and Partner); not as a script, but as a flexible framework that supports relationship-centered work.

Closing Thoughts

While I may be new to the role, I'm deeply committed to the values this program stands for: safety, dignity, and care for everyone who walks through our door. I look forward to what the coming year brings and to continuing to grow this essential work.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and learning more about updates to the ANKORS West drug checking program.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any questions regarding the information included in this report.

We can be reached by phone at 236-972-7080 or by email at drugcheckankors@gmail.com.

Thank you,

Jennifer King
ANKORS Drug Checking Program Coordinator