



obstetrician, Kootenay doctors who specialize in trigger point injections — the list goes on. They are unpaid volunteers, receiving nothing more than a festival ticket for their time. The positions are competitive, and the turnover rate is low. It's a passion for medical, music and an environment with unique challenges that keeps them coming back year after year. Together, they set the gold standard for what on-site medical at festivals should be. There are very few conditions this highly astute team is unable to treat on-site.

"We may have to send between 10 and 15 people over the week to the local hospital for needs we aren't able to manage," says Shambhala Medical Director, Brendan Munn, who is serving in his role for the sixth consecutive year. "Compared to a local community of similar size in this region, we are sending only 10 percent of the ambulances that

would normally be expected."

Part of the reason their methods are so effective is due to the acuity of their first response team. On average, it takes about two-and-a-half minutes to reach a person in need. An intuitive festival layout, alphabetically organized campsites and roving helpers known as 'Paper Boys,' who respond to incidents on foot, help minimize the amount of time that passes in emergency situations.

"We always focus on how to make those first five minutes count," Munn shares. "I want to find more ways to push that to attendees too — showing them steps to increase the safety around them, and really build that into the culture of the festival."

It's already happening. Just outside medical HQ is a trailer where a partner organization delivers Naloxone trainings on demand, using real syringes

and navel oranges to represent the fleshy part of a victim's buttocks. These tools and knowledge help reduce preventable overdose death, and equip attendees with skills they can use in the real world. Munn is an innovator. He has presented at the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM) Conference numerous times, on topics like 'Preparing and Planning for Recreational Substances at Music Festivals: Considerations from Public Health to Critical Care,' and will no doubt continue to build upon the exceptional level of care that Shambhala provides.

COLLABORATION

Every aspect of the groundbreaking festival is the result of constant collaboration. From its immersive stages which are produced by local artist collectives to its inspiring teams of health, safety and harm reduction experts who keep attendees on the right path, Shambhala is proof that humans are stronger when we work together.

Mat the Alien, a turntablist, d&b legend and 18-year Shambhala veteran responds frankly when we ask him why he comes back every year.

"It's world renowned for being one of the most unique festivals," he says with excitement. "BC and Canada have amazing, open-minded crowds, and when Shambhala happens, it's a huge get together of friends from across the globe." We too see the people who eat, sleep and breathe Shambhala as our friends, but also, they are family. Bound by our affinity for the alternative lifestyle, Shambhala will always be our safe place. Shambhala will always be home.