



Harm Reduction and Syringe Access Program – Louisville's Experience

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Disclosures

No conflicts of interest to disclose

Agenda



1. Harm Reduction
2. Identifying the problem
3. Benefits of Syringe Access Services
4. Louisville's Syringe Access Program

Objectives

- Define harm reduction
- Understand the key principles of harm reduction
- Identify the need for harm reduction, focusing on people who inject drugs (PWID)
- Identify key harm reduction strategies to support our work
- Define the need for syringe access programs from a harm reduction perspective

Working Definition of Harm Reduction

A set of practical, public health strategies designed to:

- Reduce the negative consequences of drug use, and;
- Promote healthy individuals and communities.

Harm Reduction Defined

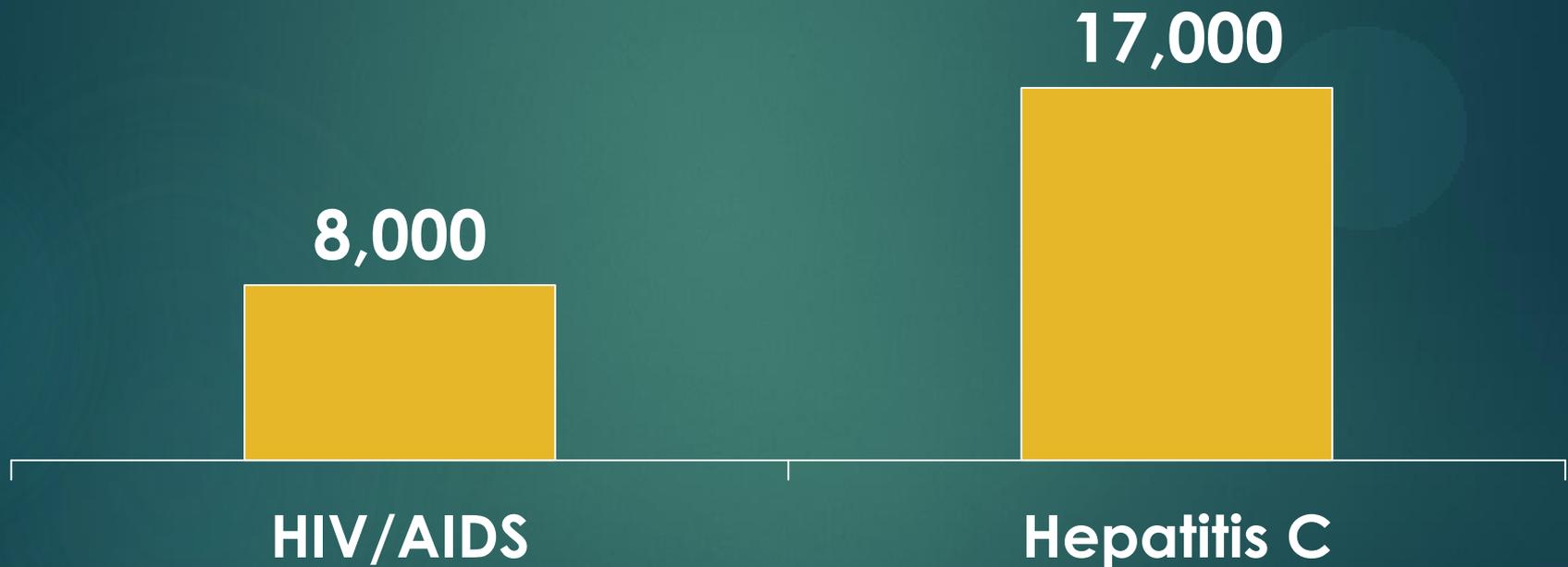
- A set of practical strategies that **reduce the negative consequences** of drug use and other risk behaviors (i.e. sexual risk).
- In relation to drug use it incorporates a **spectrum of strategies** from *safer use* → *managed use* → *abstinence*.
- Harm reduction strategies **meet people "where they're at"** (but don't leave them there).

Goals of Harm Reduction

- Increased health and well-being
- Increased self-esteem and self efficacy
- Better living situations
- Reduced isolation and stigma
- Safer drug use
- Reduced drug use and/or abstinence

Disease Transmission

New Infections Yearly Due to Syringe and Equipment Sharing (United States)



Sources:

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, AIDS United.

<http://www.aidsunited.org/policy-advocacy/issues/syringe-exchange/>

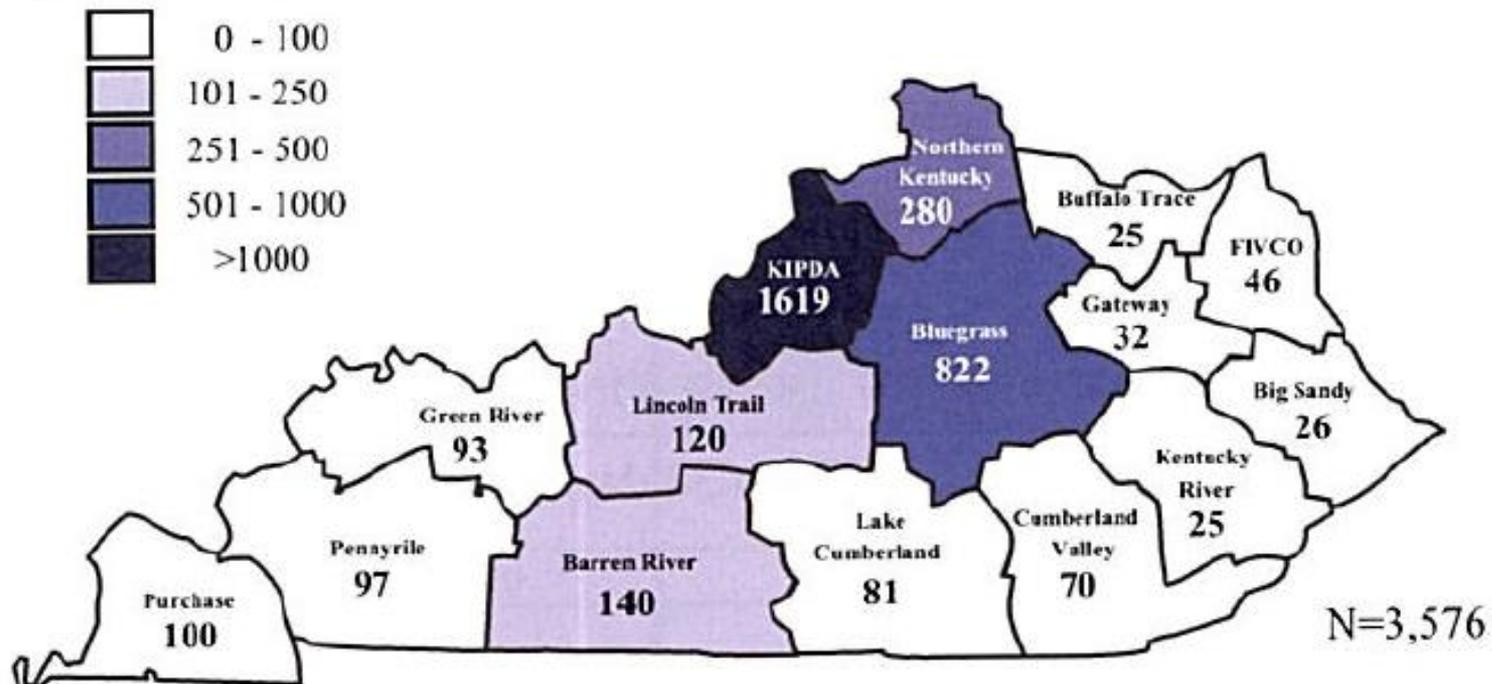
http://www.cdc.gov/idu/hepatitis/viral_hep_drug_use.htm

http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Poisoning/brief_full_page.htm

HIV in Kentucky

Figure 19. Number of HIV Disease Diagnoses within each Area Development District of Residence at Time of Diagnosis, for the Most Recent 10.5 years, January 1, 2004—June 30, 2014, Kentucky

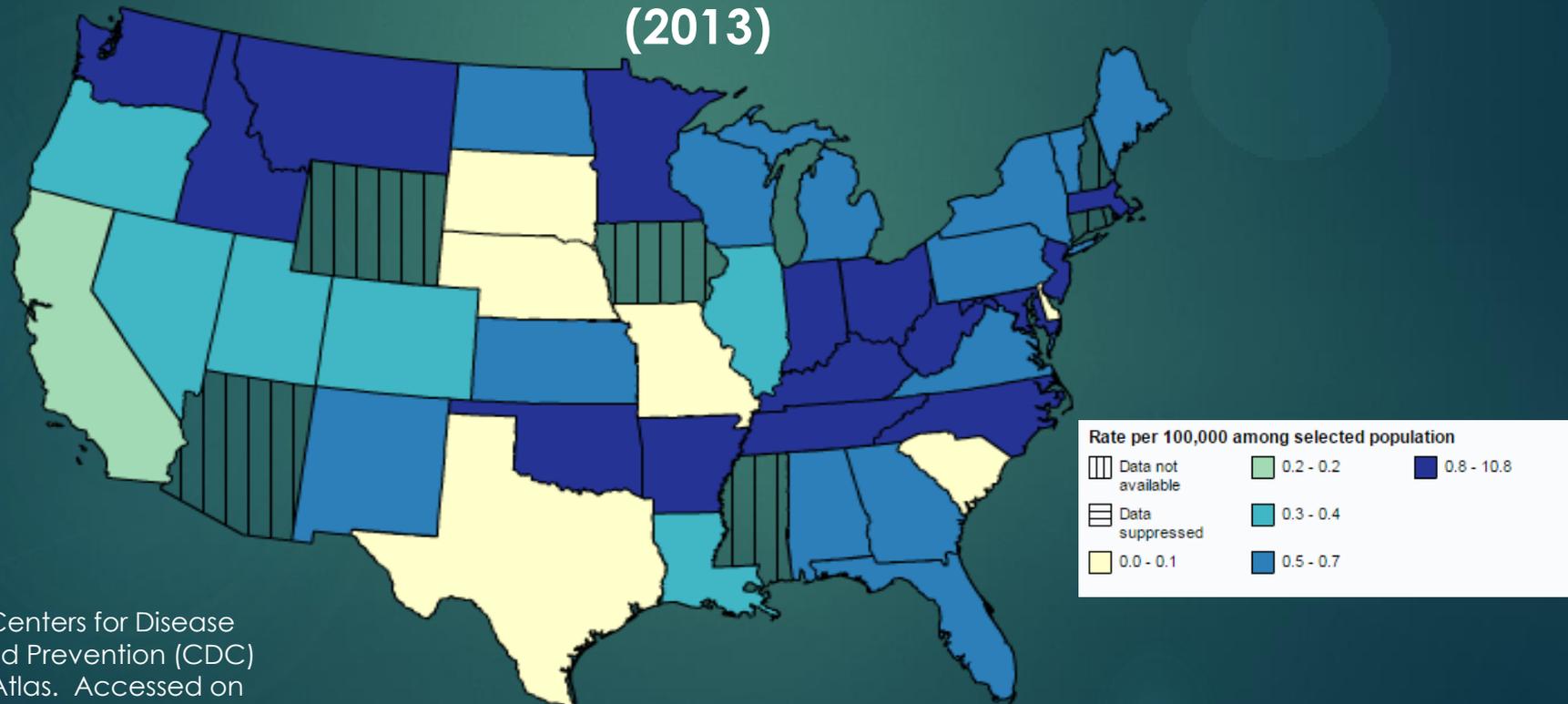
No. by ADD: January 1, 2004—June 30, 2014



Hepatitis C in Kentucky

- Kentucky's Hepatitis C rate is 7x the national average
Kentucky: 5.1 per 100,000 **Nation:** 0.7 per 100,000

Acute Viral Hepatitis C (2013)

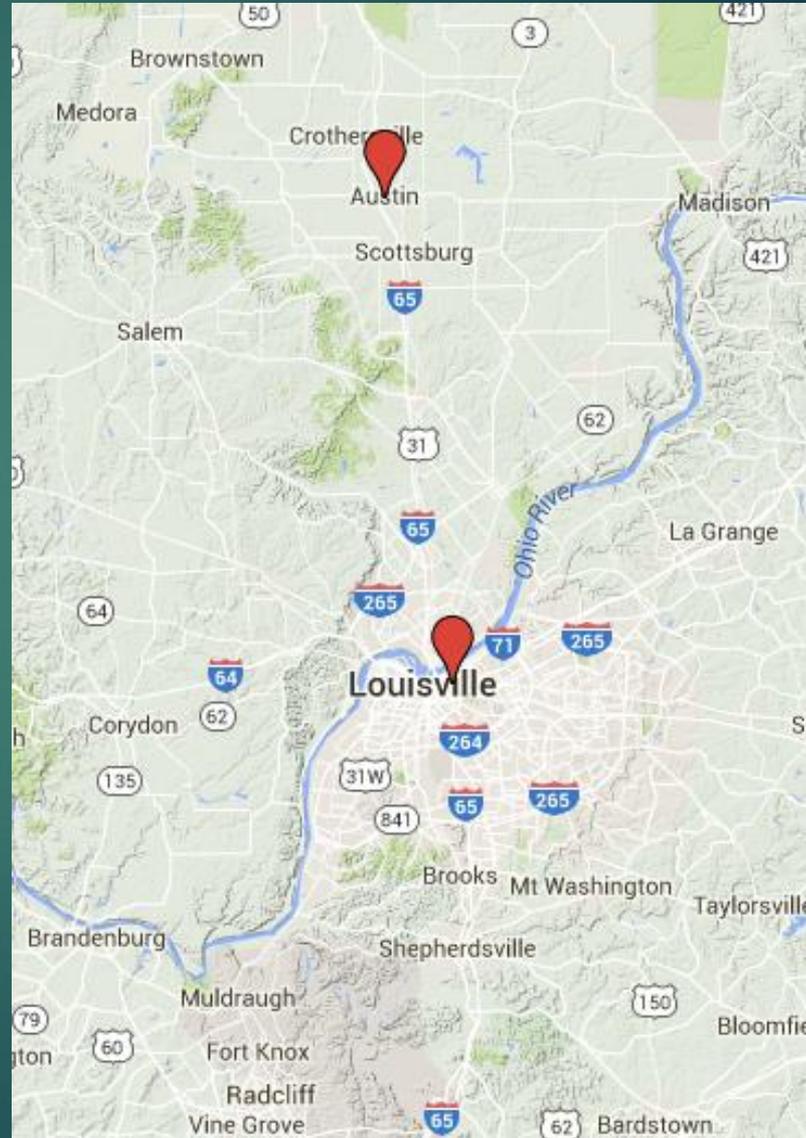


Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) NCHHSTP Atlas. Accessed on 12/11/2015.

Outbreak – Austin, IN

184 HIV cases in 2015
(total Austin, IN
population: 4,200)

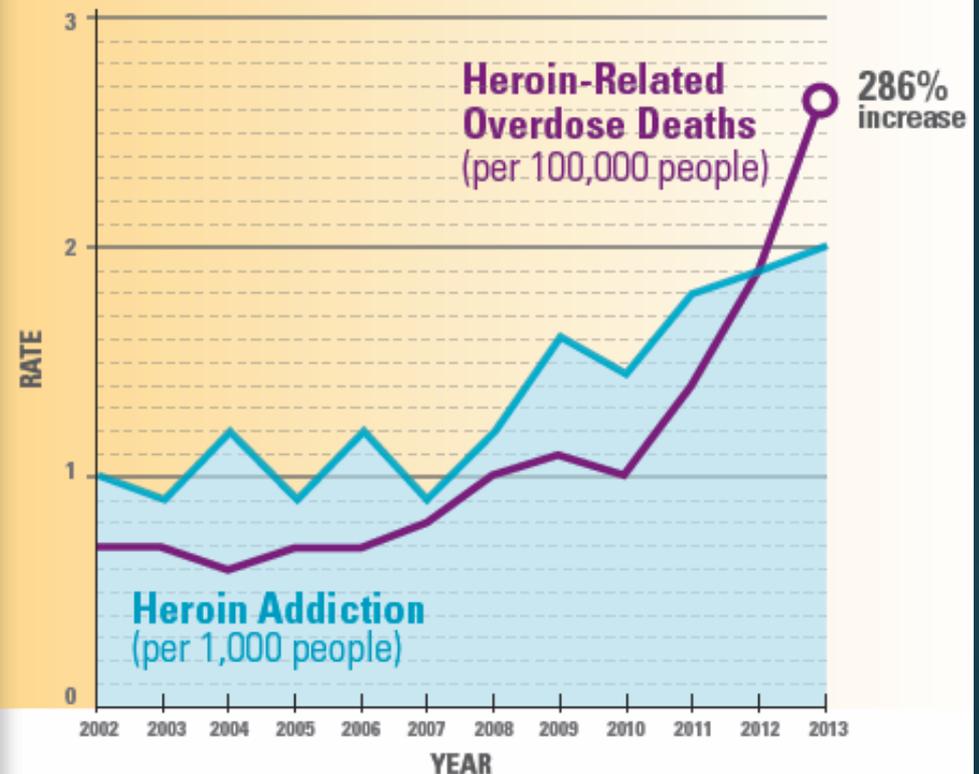
- 86 % co-infected with Hepatitis C
- Equivalent in Jefferson Co. would be 33,000 new HIV and 28,000 new Hep C cases



Overdose in the US

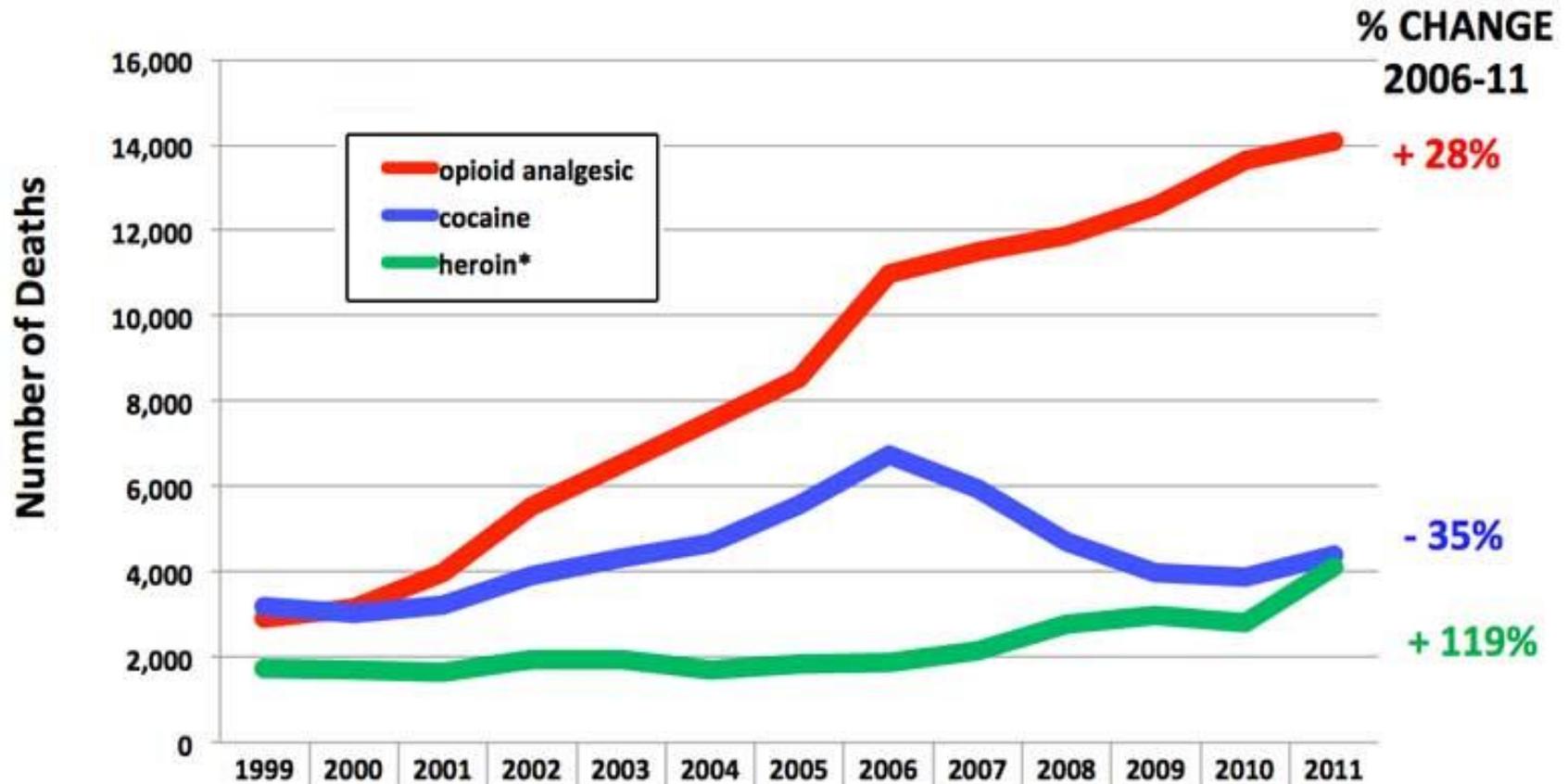
- Overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the US
- Both heroin addiction and heroin related overdose deaths have been increasing over the past decade.

Heroin Addiction and Overdose Deaths are Climbing



SOURCES: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 2002-2013.
National Vital Statistics System, 2002-2013.

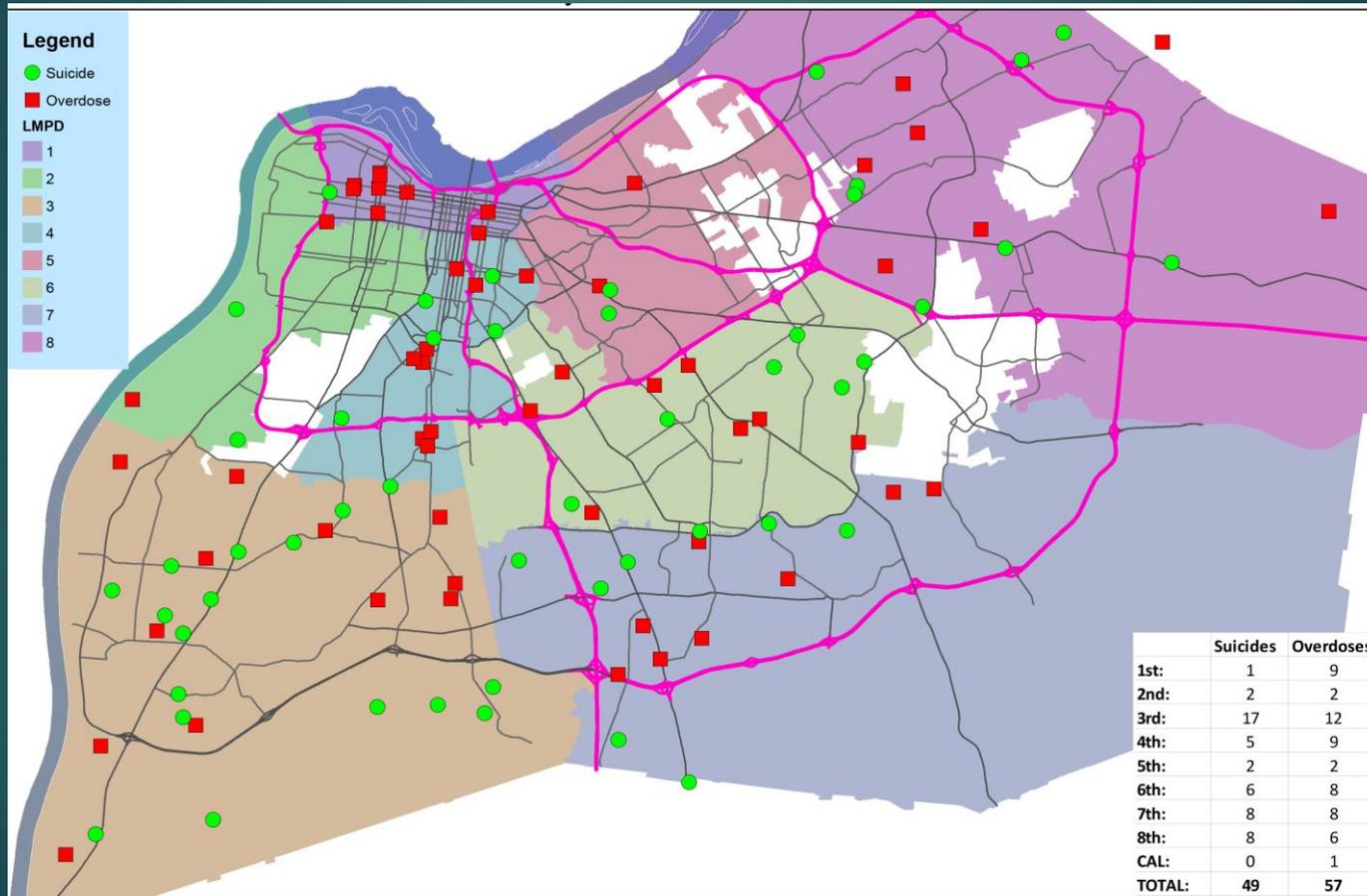
Unintentional Drug Poisoning Deaths Involving Opioid Analgesics, Cocaine and Heroin: United States, 1999–2011



Source: National Center for Health Statistics/CDC, National Vital Statistics Report, Final death data for each calendar year (June 2014).

Overdose in Jefferson Co., KY

- Jefferson Co. leads the state in overdose deaths
- Overdoses:
 - 204 overdoses in 2014, 105 due to Heroin
 - 2,863 EMS naloxone interventions (Jan 2014 through June 2015)



Challenges

PWIDs tend to have...

- High prevalence of:
 - Other health problems
 - Mental health issues
 - Trauma
- Poor social support
- Higher level of homelessness
- Higher level of previous incarceration
- Poor relationship with the healthcare system

Barriers to Treatment

Drug treatment is not always a viable option:

- Limited availability
- Research demonstrates drug dependence is a chronic condition (i.e., relapse is a part of the process)
- People may often not be ready to quit or choose not to seek treatment



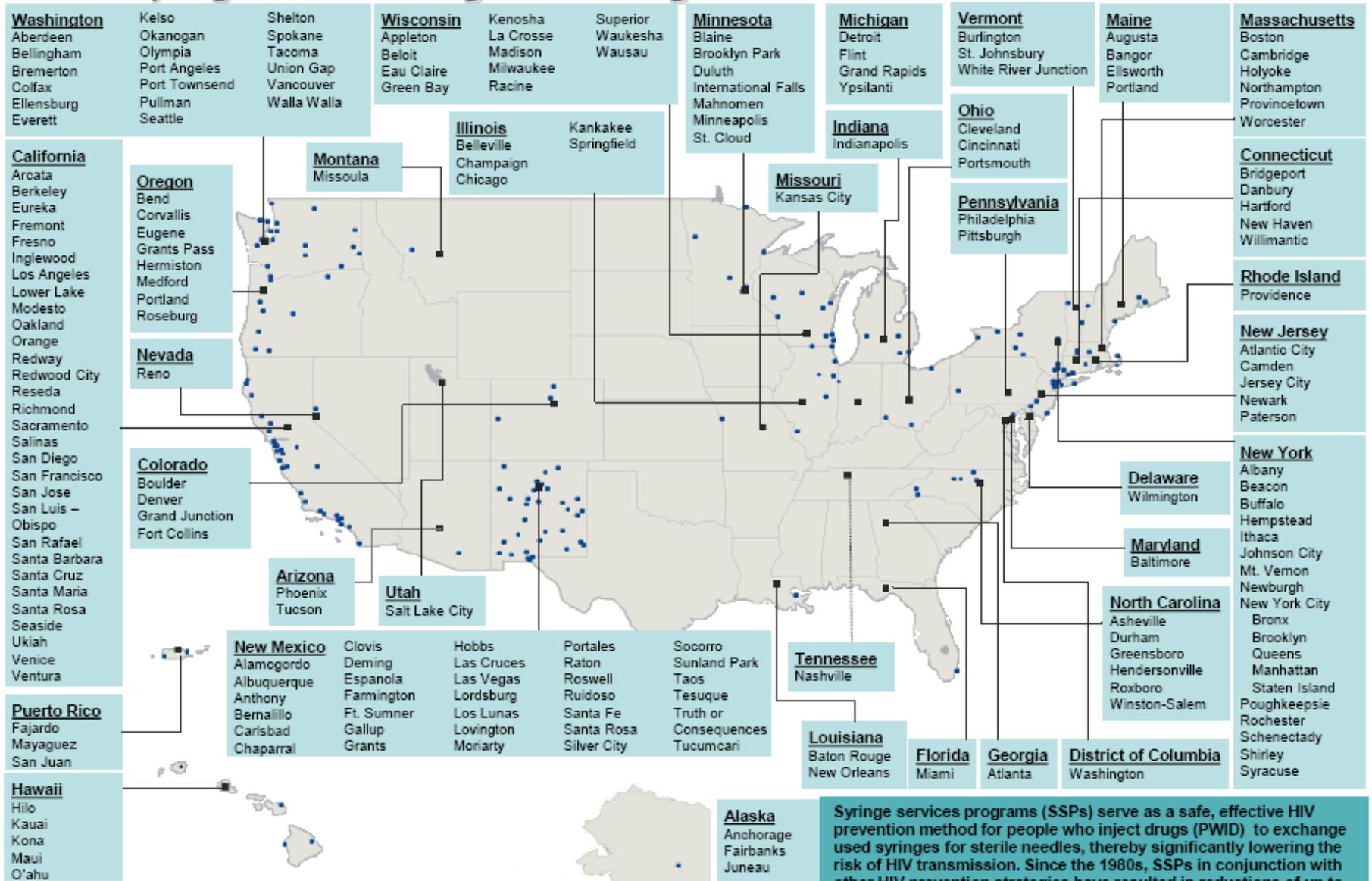
Meeting People Where They Are

Syringe access programs

- Started in Holland in the 1980s in response to a hepatitis B outbreak
- First US SAP in Tacoma, WA in 1988 in response to the AIDS crisis



Syringe Services Program Coverage in the United States - June 2014



This map was prepared by amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research. Information on syringe services programs was provided by the North American Syringe Exchange Network (NASEN) and Mount Sinai Beth Israel from their lists of syringe services programs that confirmed their willingness to have this information made public.

Syringe services programs (SSPs) serve as a safe, effective HIV prevention method for people who inject drugs (PWID) to exchange used syringes for sterile needles, thereby significantly lowering the risk of HIV transmission. Since the 1980s, SSPs in conjunction with other HIV prevention strategies have resulted in reductions of up to 80% in HIV incidence among PWID.

- There are currently 194 syringe services programs in 33 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Indian Nations. (NASEN)
- This map shows the location of 196 cities with SSPs.

Dispelling Myths about SAPs

Syringe Access Programs **DO NOT:**

- ...encourage drug use
- ...increase crime rates
- ...increase inappropriately discarded syringes
- ...increase needle stick injuries

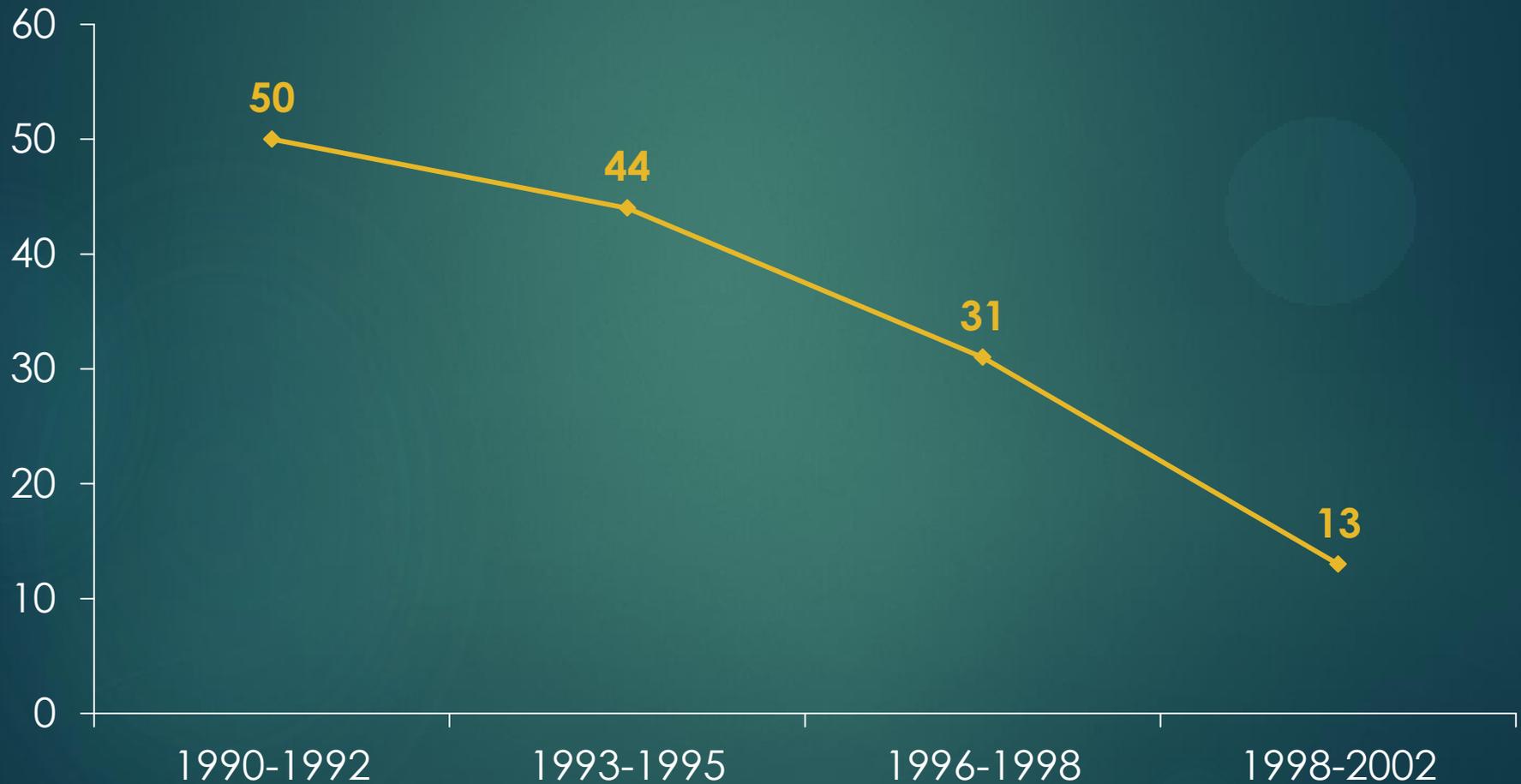
Benefits of SAPs:

Reduced HIV incidence

- Most effective, evidence-based HIV prevention tool for people who use drugs
- Seven federally-funded studies found syringe exchange programs are a valuable resource
- Across the nation, cities have reversed the course of the AIDS epidemic by providing sterile syringes and harm reduction practices for people who inject drugs.

Evidence of Success - NYC

HIV Seroprevalence Among PWIDs in NYC



Benefits of SAPs:

Connecting to Services

SAPs connect difficult-to-reach populations to much needed services:

- Detox and drug treatment programs
- Medical, dental, and mental health services
- Counseling and referral
- Case management
- HIV/HCV services
- Housing services
- Community building
- Overdose prevention
- Prevention for non-injectors



Benefits of SAPs:

Cost-Effectiveness

- Lifetime cost of medical care for each new HIV infection: **\$385,200 to \$618,000**
- Lifetime cost of medical care for hepatitis C: **\$100,000+**.
 - Liver transplants: **\$600,000+**
 - New treatments: **\$1,000 per pill**
- Spending the same amount on syringe access could prevent dozens of new HIV and HCV infections annually.
 - Cost of one sterile syringe: **8 cents**

Sources:.

Press Release. Schackman B. The Lifetime Cost of Current Human Immunodeficiency Virus Care in the United States. Medical Care, Nov 2006; vol 44: pp 990-997.

Press Release. San Francisco Hep C Task Force Releases Recommendations for Fighting Epidemic. Available at http://www.natap.org/2010/newsUpdates/012611_04.htm

Benefits of SAPs:

Fewer needle stick injuries

- 30% of law enforcement officers have experienced a needle stick injury (NSI).
- Following implementation of SAPs, 66% reduction in NSIs among law enforcement officers.



Sources: Lorenz J, et al. Occupational Needlestick Injuries in a Metropolitan Police Force. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 2000. 18:146-150.

Groseclose SL, et al. Impact of Increased Legal Access to Needles and Syringes on Practices of Injecting Drug Users and Police Officers—Connecticut 1992-1993. *Journal of AIDS and Human Retrovirology*. 10(1): 71-72.

What do SAPs look like?

- Storefront
- Street-based
- Secondary or peer-delivered
- Underground programs
- Pharmacy access



Louisville Metro's Syringe Exchange Program



Louisville Metro Syringe Exchange Program

- Opened June 10, 2015
- Unanimously approved by:
 - Louisville Metro Council
 - Louisville Metro Board of Health
- Primary site: non-mobile unit adjacent to headquarters
- **New community exchange sites:**
 - Oct 22, 2015: Lake Dreamland Fire Station
 - 4603 Cane Run Rd
 - Thursdays, 11 am – 2pm
 - December 2015: Redeemer Lutheran Church
 - 3640 River Park Dr.
 - Tuesdays, 11am – 2pm

Louisville Metro Syringe Exchange Program - Staff

- A certified alcohol and substance abuse counselor provides staffing for the site
- The Seven Counties Services, Inc. and Jefferson Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center (JADAC) have assigned a full time addictions treatment case manager
 - Works with participants on drug treatment options
 - Makes treatment referrals
- HIV prevention specialists – screen for HIV and Hep C

Program Goals

1. To prevent the spread of blood-borne diseases transmitted by needle sharing, such as HIV and hepatitis C.
2. To link people who inject drugs to the health system where they can get treatment.



The program provides...

- Free sterile syringes
- Sharps container to safely return used syringes
- HIV testing and prevention supplies
- Hepatitis C testing
- Referrals for addiction treatment
- Education and counseling on STD prevention, wound treatment, and syringe disposal
- Naloxone on-site and referrals for the take-home use of naloxone.



Demographics

- Mean Age: 33 years
- Gender: Female 35%, Male 65%
- Sex Orientation: Heterosexual 90%, Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual 10%
- Race: White 92%, Black 5%,
- Employment: Employed 36%, Unemployed 64%
- Insurance: Medicaid 56%, Medicare 6%, Private 14%, Uninsured 23%
- Drug Use: Heroin 75%, Other opioids 7%, Cocaine 4%, Methamphetamine 13%

Evidence of Success – Louisville KY



In first 6 months:

- **~1,500** participants
 - **No positive** HIV screens
 - **<62% positive** for Hepatitis C
 - **91** people referred for drug treatment
- 

Summary

- Harm reduction – strategy to reduce the negative consequences of drug use and promote healthy individuals and communities
- Injection drug use, particularly heroin, is on the rise
 - Increased rate of hepatitis C
 - At risk for HIV outbreak
 - Increase in overdose events
- Syringe Access Programs
 - Prevent spread of blood borne pathogens
 - Connect PWID to services
 - Are cost effective

More Information

Website: <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/health-wellness/syringe-exchange-program>

- Latest hours and locations
- Guidelines and more presentations
- Handouts – treatment and mental health referrals, safe syringe disposal, naloxone

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