

North Central Public Health Report

North Central Public Health District ACDP Health Equity Mini-grant Report

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GOAL

The overall goal of this project was to use these grant funds to enhance and expand NCPHD's harm reduction services.

PROPOSED OUTCOMES

Originally, the proposed outcomes were: 1) Purchase three community sharps disposal containers & associated materials (decals and inner containers) to collect and dispose of injection drug equipment, and 2) additional funding would be used to pay for additional sharps disposal pickups or for marketing harm reduction services, and a small amount of the funds would go to personnel time.

ACTIVITIES

We began by seeking quotes for community sharps kiosks from companies that were recommended by staff at OHA and Multnomah County. After finding one with a model we liked in our price range, we went ahead and ordered 3 wall-mounted kiosks and two 20-packs of inner disposable sharps containers at the beginning of June 2019.

Next we sought a quote from our sharps disposal service on how much it would cost to increase the frequency of our pickups. We currently only get pickups once per quarter (4/year), but the remaining funds were not enough to increase the frequency of our pickups in a meaningful way. We discussed the backup plan of using the remaining funds for marketing activities, but decided it wasn't feasible given the short turnaround of the grant funding period.

Ultimately we decided to use the remaining funds to purchase 18 two-packs of NARCAN. It ended up being a good way to make sure the funds were spent down before the deadline, and also still enhance our harm reduction services.

DESIRED vs. ACTUAL RESULTS

We received the sharps kiosks on 7/30/19, a little later than we had anticipated.

Notwithstanding the delay, we are moving forward with the program by evaluating potential locations for the kiosks, and garnering support from partner agencies. So far, we have received endorsements from the North Wasco County Parks & Rec District, which owns and manages most of the city parks in The Dalles, and both the Wasco County Sheriff's Department, and City of The Dalles Police Department. The Parks & Rec department has already agreed to let us put a kiosk up at any of their properties. However, our current first choice is a park that is owned by the City of The Dalles (Lewis and Clark Festival Park), and will likely require approval from the City Manager and/or the City Council. We're still exploring options for Sherman and Gilliam counties, though likely candidates include the Biggs Junction truck stop at the intersection of I-84 and Highway 97 in Sherman County, and the waterfront park in Arlington in Gilliam County.

As mentioned previously, our original intent was to use leftover funds towards increasing our sharps pickups, or marketing our harm reduction services, neither of which panned out. Instead we used the funds to purchase 18 NARCAN kits.

After several meetings with the medical staff at Northern Oregon Regional Correctional facility (NORCOR), the jail has agreed to help us use the kits to create a pilot program of sorts to get naloxone into the hands of people who use opioids or who have close friends or family who do as they are released from jail. Participants will be recruited by the jail medical staff as part of a health screening that is given during the booking process. They'll be asked a few targeted questions regarding their drug use behaviors, and willingness to receive or administer NARCAN. If they agree to participate, they will receive brief training on administering NARCAN, and receive one kit along with information on preventing drug overdose upon being released from jail. Participants will also agree to receive a communication from the health department in the future to assess for usage of the NARCAN. We hope to use data gathered from this limited pilot program as evidence to support further funding and expansion of the program if it is successful.

We are currently in the process of working out the details of participant recruitment and what questions they will be asked, along with creating an MOU between the jail and NCPHD.

Data

These funds were used to fund two separate projects under NCPHD's harm reduction program. The target population for this grant was people who use illicit drugs, particularly opioids. Both programs are currently in the development phase, so there isn't currently any data to share, though both should eventually generate data that will be useful for informing future efforts. For example, data from these projects may be used to support implementation of a syringe exchange program in Wasco County, or to continue and expand the NARCAN program with NORCOR.

Some data were used in the process of deciding what to use the grant funds for. The Oregon Health Authority's Opioid Data Dashboard shows that Wasco County was in the top five among Oregon counties for rate of drug overdose hospitalizations for all drugs in 2017 (the most current year available). For heroin or other opioids specifically, our counties have some of the lowest rates of overdose hospitalization.¹ However, we know that people are often poly-substance users, or fluctuate back and forth between multiple substances depending on what is available at the time. Anecdotally, interviews with both the director of North Wasco Parks & Rec and a Sheriff's deputy from Wasco County revealed that their agencies find used injection equipment both at our local parks and in the community at large.

With regards to the NARCAN pilot program, several studies have shown that jail inmates that use opioids are at significantly elevated risk for opioid overdose death upon being released from jail, presumably due to diminished tolerance while incarcerated. One such study from North Carolina that was published in the September 2018 edition of the American Journal of Public Health found that over a 16 year period from 2000-2015, former inmates who identified as opioid users were 40 times more likely to die of overdose within two weeks of being released compared with NC residents. When examining the type of opioid used, inmates who were heroin users were found to be 74 times more likely to die of overdose within two weeks of being released.²

Attachments



Figure 1. Community sharps kiosk with associated materials



Figure 2. One NARCAN Kit

Citations

1. Prescribing and Overdose Data for Oregon. (n.d.). Retrieved July 30, 2019, from <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PREVENTIONWELLNESS/SUBSTANCEUSE/OPIOIDS/Pages/data.aspx>
2. Ranapurwala, S. I., Shanahan, M. E., Alexandridis, A. A., Proescholdbell, S. K., Naumann, R. B., Edwards, D., Jr., & Marshall, S. W. (2018). Opioid Overdose Mortality Among Former North Carolina Inmates: 2000-2015. *American Journal of Public Health*, 108(9), 1105-1264, 1207-1213.