

**Health Director's Report
October 12, 2023**

Division / Program: Population Health / Epidemiology

Activity 26.3: The local health department shall assure that agency staff receives training in cultural sensitivity and competency.

Program description

The Population Health division holds an annual day-long retreat to plan for the fiscal year. The retreat includes training topics, presentations on local public health activities, strategic planning and teambuilding activities to strengthen relationships between team members. The August 24 retreat was held at the Criminal Justice Resource Center.

Statement of goals

- Provide an opportunity away from the office to focus on longer term planning and develop a division strategic plan for fiscal year 2024.
- Learn about how to be explicit about the role of equity in public health and how that informs the work that Population Health does.
- Determine how the Population Health division can align their work with the Durham County Department of Public Health and external partners.
- Provide an opportunity for teambuilding and relationship building between Population Health team members.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - Received a presentation from Jannah Bierens with Phreedom LLC. The presentation focused on assisting staff 1) Become more rooted in the historical context that has led to current conditions of power imbalance, 2) assess workplace norms and culture to think critically about how power imbalance shows up in the workplace, 3) reflect on how these deeply entrenched workplace norms can be counterproductive to equity, while also causing burnout that impacts overall health and wellbeing, and 4) think about opportunities for change that become visible when we begin to think outside of the box that we continuously check.
 - Start the strategic planning process of what areas the Population Health division will focus on for fiscal year 2024.
 - Had discussions about how equity, power and historical policies impact our work and what we can do address those.
 - Population health staff each actively participated in planning different components of the retreat.
- **Challenges**
 - Technical difficulties with the AV equipment delayed the start of the presentation and disrupted the flow of the retreat.
 - Allowing enough time to accomplish everything on the agenda.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**

- Identified goal areas for the Population Health FY 24 strategic plan.
- Developed ideas for further advancing equity in Population Health work.
- Spent a day connecting with one another in person when it is rare due to remote work schedules.
- Evaluation results showed that team members rated the retreat at 4.83 (out of 5) for the topics covered were relevant to my work, I can apply information learned at the retreat to my work and the retreat was well organized.
- Additional evaluation comments include- “The entire day provided opportunities for learning, discussion and teambuilding” and “I loved this retreat and I love our team.”

- **Staffing**

- The retreat was attended by all members of the Population Health division and Deputy Director Kristen Patterson.

- **Revenue**

- None

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- Finalize the Population Health strategic plan at the October 4 division meeting.
- Measure progress towards strategic plan strategies and objectives.
- Continue to think about how Population Health can shift power and address the root causes of inequities in our work.

Division / Program: Health Education & Community Transformation / Improving Community Outcomes for Maternal and Child Health – National Breastfeeding Month (Accreditation Activity 10.2 – The local health department shall develop, implement, and evaluate population-based health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials for the general public)

Program description

- The Improving Community Outcomes for Maternal and Child Health (ICO4MCH) initiative is intended to improve birth outcomes, reduce infant mortality, and improve the health statuses of children ages birth to five.
- In recognition of National Breastfeeding Month, ICO4MCH collaborated with our partners, Breastfeed Durham, Family Connects, and MAAME to celebrate, educate, and empower lactating families.

Statement of goals

- Utilize The Ten Steps for Successful Breastfeeding with a specific focus on Step 3 and Step 10 to reduce infant mortality in Durham County

- Breastfeeding is a well-documented preventative health measure and one of the best modalities available to health care providers to reduce the risk of common causes of infant mortality in the United States.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - With the assistance of Love Anderson of Breastfeed Durham, we were able to develop a comprehensive strategic plan serving as a roadmap to foster policy, environmental, and systematic changes to increase breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity in Durham County.
- **Challenges**
 - It has been difficult to maintain breastfeeding objectives with clinic staff turnover from various departments within Durham County and other community partners.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - Live, Love & Latch
 - Land acknowledgment and indigenous milk storytelling picnic.
 - Black Lunch and Learn: Breastfeeding Collaborative
 - Educational event discussing support services and resources available to breastfeeding families through community-based organizations.
 - Mocha Milk Club Lactation Skills Lab
 - Educational event discussing hospital feeding practices and emergency preparedness for expecting families wishing to breastfeed their children.
 - A specific outreach program was created for
 - A safe space for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), Queer, Trans, Non-binary, and Migrant Communities to share stories, find support, gather information, and network with others who are nursing.
 - Breastfeeding Symposia
 - Training attended by 14 healthcare providers, discussing navigating the healthcare system and integrating peer support techniques.
- **Service delivery**
 - All outreach and educational events are promoted through a listserv, social media, and word of mouth.
 - Events are available in three formats, virtual, in-person, and hybrid.
- **Staffing**
 - Two full-time program staff: One Public Health Education Specialist, Shakeya Brevard, and one Community Health Worker, Andrea Chicas
 - Dennis Hamlet has served as the Program Manager.

- **Revenue**
 - Improving Community Outcomes for Maternal and Child Health, AA164, provides \$450,000 of funding per fiscal year, to address three prevention strategies.
 - Current grant funding has been awarded through May 31, 2024. Reapplication will occur this fiscal year.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- Plan and implement the Health Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA) in October. The HEIA is intended to facilitate discussions about factors that support or weaken individual and community health, including the root causes of disparities and inequities, providing a collaborative perspective to guide our team in strategic planning to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration across Durham County.

Division / Program: Health Education & Community Transformation Division / Addressing SUD in Older/Senior Residents Education Activity

(Accreditation Activity 20.2: The local health department shall collaborate with community health care providers and agencies to reduce barriers to access to care.)

Program Description:

- According to 2021 data, persons aged 45-64-years accounted for 40 percent of overdose and overdose deaths in Durham. While illicit drug use typically declines following young adulthood; nearly 1 million US adults, aged 65 and older, live with a substance use disorder (SUD). Risk factors for SUD in older adults include increased access to alcohol and prescription drugs, as well as a decrease in family support and social interaction related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is critical that older adults and those who work with them are educated on stigma, harm reduction, treatment related to SUD, and overdose prevention and response.

Statement of Goals

- To collaborate with Durham Housing Authority (DHA) to address the growing issue of substance use in Durham’s senior population.
- The intent of these collaborative efforts is to:
 - Educate staff and senior residents of DHA communities on substance use disorders (SUD), the effects of stigma, and harm reduction;
 - Raise awareness that a substance use disorder is a complex disease of the brain, rather than a moral failing;
 - Debunk myths about SUD, harm reduction and medication assisted treatment (MAT); and
 - Increase the use of person-first language in Durham’s senior communities.

Issues:

- **Opportunities**
 - In May of 2021, the DCoDPH Tobacco Health Educator Specialist shared a presentation on the BOH Smoking Rule for DHA with a group of older adults living in Forest Hills Heights. Following the presentation, the Resident

Opportunity for Self-sufficiency (ROSS) Services Coordinator for DHA provided the Tobacco Health Educator a list of topics for future presentations. The list was shared during a meeting of the Health Promotion & Wellness Team. Among these topics was “Substance Misuse in DHA Senior Housing and the Problems Resulting for Other Senior Residents.” After presenting the topic to the Overdose Prevention and Response Project’s Educational Initiatives Committee as a possible new initiative, the Injury Prevention Health Educator began the task of verifying that the topic was a valid concern for seniors living in DHA housing, rather than complaints about a few isolated incidents from those upset by the DHA Smoking Rule.

- Following an email from the Aging and Adult Services Division of DSS mentioning the ever-growing issue of substance misuse among Durham’s aging population and a conversation with the Residential Services Program Manager with DHA, confirming substance use as a concern in DHA senior housing, the Overdose Prevention and Response Education Initiatives Committee decided to pursue educational opportunities to address the concerns of DHA residents.

Challenges

- Although attempts to discuss plans to present on SUD to the residents living in DHA housing for seniors began in the fall of 2022, it took several attempts to actually schedule the first session for April of 2023.
- A discussion between the Injury Prevention Health Educator and the DHA ROSS Services coordinator revealed that residents would be less likely to attend a formal presentation, and that residents may walk out if efforts were not made to allow them active participation during educational sessions. In anticipation of this potential challenge, the Injury Prevention Health Educator and the ROSS Services Coordinator took the following actions:
 - Presentations would involve “table talk” during a meal or snack and followed by a much-anticipated game of BINGO to encourage participants to stay for the full presentation.
 - The Injury Prevention Health Educator developed a “Myths or Facts” discussion activity covering SUD, stigma, and harm reduction, to involve participants in the discussion.

Implication(s):

• Outcomes

- The Health Promotion & Wellness Team has partnered with DHA to offer evidence-based programs Chronic Disease and Diabetes Self-Management, Matter of Balance falls prevention and other presentations and topics related to aging. However, this is the first time that the team has worked with DHA to offer education related to SUD and Older Adults.
- Prior to the start of presentations in April of 2023, DCoDPH’s Overdose Prevention and Response Project Manager was invited to present information on DCoDPH’s harm reduction and overdose prevention services to the Golden Life Partnership, which organizes residents in low-income apartment complexes to

improve their health and well-being, starting with adequate nutritious food and healthcare.

- At present, a total of four presentations have been conducted in DHA senior housing communities.
- Outcomes of activities are speculative at this point. However, strategies involve educating staff and senior residents of DHA communities on substance use disorders (SUD); harm reduction; medication assisted treatment; the effects of stigma; and raising awareness that a substance use disorder is a complex disease of the brain, rather than a moral failing.
- Increasing the use of person first language in Durham's senior communities will ultimately result in a decrease in the stigma of SUD, a decrease in social isolation among older adults and an increase in willingness to seek treatment for SUD.

- **Service Delivery**

- DCoDPH's Overdose Prevention and Response Educational Initiatives Committee is working with DHA to provide educational sessions in 4 DHA senior communities to include:
 - 04/04/23-Attended Resident Council Meeting for Priess-Steele Community. Conducted educational session, reaching 11 participants.
 - 05/11/23 Attended Resident Council Meeting at 519 E. Main (Formerly Oldham Towers) Community. Conducted educational session, reaching 20 participants.
 - 08/01/23 Attended Nursing Students Visit at J. Henderson Towers. Conducted educational session, reaching 14 participants.
 - 08/21/23 Attended Chew and Chat at Forest Hills Heights Community. Conducted education session, reaching 9 participants.
- In addition, recorded the educational presentation as a guest of the ROSS Services Coordinator's YouTube show, *Coffee with Joyce*.

- **Staffing**

- One DCoDPH Injury Prevention Public Health Education Specialist – Worked with DHA ROSS Services Coordinator to schedule educational sessions and prepare educational activity.
- One DCoDPH Overdose Prevention and Response Project Manager conducted an educational session with the Golden Life Partnership on SUD resources provided by DCoDPH.
- One DHA ROSS Services Coordinator who has worked with DCoDPH to help senior/older adult residents to access requested education on SUD, Stigma and Harm Reduction.

- **Revenue**

- No revenue was generated as a result of these activities.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- The Educational Initiatives Committee of the Overdose Prevention and Response Project will continue working with DHA to provide education on SUD, stigma and harm reduction to seniors/older adults residing in DHA housing communities.
- The committee is also in the process of collaborating with Durham County EMS and Feed My Sheep-Durham to provide training on the use of Naloxone for Community Health Promoters residing in DHA housing.

Division/Program: Dental: Decorating and Upgrades to the Dental Lobby and Clinic Areas
(Accreditation Activity 30.1- The local health department shall have facilities that are clean, safe and secure for the specific activities being carried out in the facility or any area of the facility, such as laboratory analyses or patient examinations.)

Program description:

- The Dental Division painted and decorated its lobby and clinic to make it more kid friendly. The Division also made improvements to the employee only areas.

Statement of goals:

- To provide pediatric dental patients with a welcoming, fun, and friendly environment (*Nemo and friends* theme).
- To ensure that employee only sections are clearly marked, and the highest safety/ infection control standards are maintained.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - The Dental Division has not been (re)decorated since the Department was opened in the spring of 2011.
 - All walls were the same color, including in the lobby, clinic, x-rays rooms, hallways and *Sterilization* and *Lab & Storage* areas.
 - General Services had agreed to paint all areas and to upgrade counters in the Sterilization room. They also offered to fit stainless steel counters over those manufactured from wood and laminate.
 - The Foundation for Hospital Arts (Woodstock Georgia) donated a 6-Panel Multi-Canvas painting with an ocean scene which complemented the new décor.
- **Challenges**
 - As the Division sees patients Monday-Friday, and to avoid rescheduling appointments, the team had to work with General Services to find times to paint.
 - All equipment and stations had to be carefully stored and any signs, etc., had to be removed for the painting to be completed.
 - The original counters in the sterilization room had to be measured and prepped for stainless steel overlayments.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - The lobby and clinic areas were painted over the course of two weekends and included the x-ray rooms.
 - Wall murals and decals continue to be placed throughout the Division. The walls were painted in two colors: Nautilus and Jamica Bay.
 - The *Sterilization* and *Lab & Storage* areas remain the original color and new signs in English/Spanish serve to further delineate the rooms as “Employees Only”.

Service delivery

- **Staffing-** Two General Services staff members painted the lobby and clinic and two additional team members installed stainless steel overlays in the sterilization area.
- **Revenue** – N/A. Some materials were purchased over two fiscal years and General Services provided the paint supplies and counters.
- **Other** –N/A

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies The Division will continue to explore ways to make any needed improvements to the clinic.

Division / Program: Nutrition / Dental Clinic (Accreditation Activity 10.4 The local health department shall promote and support the use of evidence-based health promotion/disease prevention strategies by other community agencies and organizations.)

Program description

- DINE has worked for several years with LEAP Nuestra Escuelita, a bilingual preschool serving families in Durham. A DINE nutritionist provides direct education to students and works with staff to make policy, system, and environment (PSE) changes at this school.
- Staff at the school asked about having a COVID vaccination event for their students. They also wanted to do a unit with their students about taking care of their teeth and were interested in being connected with dental services.
- DINE’s nutritionist worked with DCODPH staff to connect with UNC’s mobile clinic to do a vaccination event and health fair for the preschool and worked with public health Dental hygienist to provide dental screening /oral health education at the preschool.

Statement of goals

- Connect families at the preschool with COVID vaccines, flu vaccines, and health screenings.
- Provide education materials to preschoolers about the importance of oral health and dental screening as part of pre-k preventive dental health program. The screening serves as an educational and positive dental experience and will collect vital information to help

improve children's dental health by informing families about their children's dental health.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - This project fostered new partnerships and relationships.
 - This project educated families and their children about the importance of oral health as part of overall health.
 - This helped families find a dental home for underserved children who do not have a dental provider and to connect them with The Dental clinic at the Durham County Department of Public Health or local pediatric offices.
 - UNC was able to meet their goal of serving more of the Latinx population, which is served by Nuestra Escuelita LEAP preschool. (LEAP=Latino Educational Achievement Partnership)
- **Challenges**
 - Vaccine hesitancy remains a concern.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - 45 people attended the health fair and were able to receive health screenings and COVID and flu vaccines.
 - 48 students had dental Screening/ oral health education from the Public Health Dental Hygienist. Free toothbrushes and toothpaste were distributed.
- **Service delivery**
 - DINE nutritionist can reinforce messaging re: dental health with direct education classes with students and with ongoing policy, system, and environment changes at the center to promote oral health (for example, water bottle distribution).
- **Staffing**
 - DINE nutritionist helped coordinate between UNC and Nuestra Escuelita LEAP.
 - UNC mobile clinic conducted the health screenings.
 - El Centro provided additional community resources at the health fair.
 - Public Health dental hygienist provided screenings, educations, and toothbrushes to students at Nuestra Escuelita LEAP.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- Continue to work with preschools served by DINE who wish to be connected with health fairs and/or dental services.

Division / Program: Nutrition / Double Bucks Updates (Accreditation Activity 10.2 - The local health department shall carry, develop, implement, and evaluate health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials targeted to groups identified as at-risk in the CHA)

Program description

- Double Bucks is a nutrition incentive program running at three local farmers' markets that offers a dollar-for-dollar match to customers enrolled in SNAP, WIC, and those receiving housing vouchers. The program also doubles WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) benefits. Double Bucks runs at Durham Farmers' Market (DFM), South Durham Farmers' Market, and the Black Farmers' Market in Durham County. The program also runs at these markets in the triangle: Carrboro Farmers' Market, Chapel Hill Farmers' Market, Eno River Farmers' Market and The Black Farmers' Market (Raleigh).
- There are three pertinent updates that occurred in September.
 - DFM hosted a Senior Day in collaboration with DCoDPH's DINE nutrition education team and the Durham Center for Senior Life (DCSL).
 - DFM hosted a WIC Day in collaboration with Lincoln WIC clinics and DINE staff.
 - Durham County has committed \$480,395.72 of ARPA funds to Durham Double Bucks through December 2025.

Statement of goals

- Promote the Double Bucks program among the senior and WIC populations.
- Increase access to and consumption of nutritious foods.
- Support local farmers and the local economy.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - At the Senior Day on September 6th, seniors were invited to learn more about the Double Bucks program and how to use their FMNP vouchers in an event specially dedicated to them. All seniors in the community were invited to attend, regardless of status or participation in DCSL. DINE staff advertised the event within Durham Housing Authority sites, food pantries, and to DCSL participants. The market opened early to receive the senior visitors. DINE staff provided tastings using market produce. Reusable bags and seeds to grow vegetables at home were given out for free, and transportation was provided by DCSL.
 - In addition to matching the Senior FMNP vouchers (\$50 per person), participants were also given an extra \$10 in Double Bucks tokens.
 - 58 seniors attended Senior Day this year.
 - The redemption of Senior FMNP vouchers continues to increase at Durham Farmers' Market. So far this season \$3,160 has been redeemed and matched, compared to a total of \$2,993 last season.
 - At the WIC day on September 13th, WIC families were also given an opportunity to learn more about the Double Bucks program and were offered tastings, incentives, and activities geared towards the children. DINE staff worked alongside WIC staff to advertise the event with flyers distributed to participants during their appointments.
 - 67 families participated in WIC Day.

- In addition to matching the WIC FMNP cards (\$30 per WIC eligible family member), participants were also given an extra \$10 in Double Bucks tokens.
 - Despite WIC FMNP moving from paper vouchers to electronic cards this year, the overall redemption more than doubled. DFM has redeemed and matched \$4,710 so far this season, compared to \$2,010 in total for last year.
- Durham County has committed to fund and expand Double Bucks in Durham County, with Farmer Foodshare winning the bid to be fiscal sponsor for the program. The funds will allow Double Bucks to pilot a program in a brick-and-mortar store during this period.
- **Challenges**
 - Transportation to the event was provided for seniors only from the main DCSL site. Having transportation from additional senior and housing authority sites would help increase access to the market and participation in the event.
 - Some vendors chose not to accept WIC FMNP vouchers this year due to the changes. Vendors needed to have access to the internet on their phones during market hours as well as submit additional paperwork not previously required. This in turn creates a barrier to participation, as WIC families are less likely to come to a market with only a handful of vendors they can choose from.
 - Durham County's support of Double Bucks has been outstanding. DINE continues to look for ways to fund the markets in Orange and Wake Counties where funding is set to expire at the end of this calendar year. Duke currently is supporting those markets.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - FMNP redemption has increased compared to last year.
 - New customers are shopping at the farmers' market.
 - Double Bucks will run and expand for the next three years in Durham County.
- **Service delivery**
 - The Double Bucks program is available year-round at all Triangle Double Bucks markets, except The Black Farmers' Market which runs only in the summer season.
- **Staffing**
 - DINE Healthy Environments Nutritionist helped plan and run the activities of Senior and WIC Day. This nutritionist also provides technical assistance, organization, evaluation, and marketing for the program. A DINE Nutrition Program Manager assists with grant writing.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- DINE and market staff are working on administering customer surveys at each market, to assess program impact and customer satisfaction. Changes may be made to the program based on feedback from seniors, WIC, and other Double Bucks participants.
- All partners are also actively seeking funding to support the farmers' markets in Orange and Wake Counties.

Division / Program: Nutrition/Chronic Care Initiative-CCI/Diabetes Self-Management Educational Training (Accreditation Activity 10.2 - The local health department shall carry out or assist other agencies in the development, implementation and evaluation of health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials targeted to groups identified as at-risk in the community health assessment.)

Program description

- July 20, 2023, through September 14, 2023, the Chronic Care Initiative staff within DCoDPH's Nutrition Division partnered with Health Ed to provide a virtual Diabetes Self-Management Program for interested Spanish speaking clients.

Statement of goals

- The Nutrition Division delivers health promotion and disease prevention education and medical nutrition therapy to the residents of Durham County.
- The Diabetes Self-Management Program aims to educate residents that have either been diagnosed with diabetes- or are providing care to a relative with diabetes -with educational resources that help to maintain optimal health while living with this chronic condition.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - Collaboration between the Nutrition Division and Health Ed staff was needed as the training required 2 facilitators. A Community Health Worker with the Nutrition Division and an Education Specialist with Health Ed were able to facilitate in Spanish.
 - Residents formed connections and accountability partners via the other participants. While the training was virtual, there were opportunities for the group to meet in person and get to know one another and even do walking/healthy living activities together.
- **Challenges**
 - Ensuring all participants could log on virtually was a challenge and led to a couple of participants not being able to participate.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - Of the 13 participants that registered 8 completed all 6 sessions and activities. 2 others attended as listeners only.
 - Participants left with a better understanding of how to monitor their blood sugar and set realistic goals to help maintain their health.
 - Participants received information on nutrition and the opportunity to connect with the Nutrition Clinic/dietitians with DCoDPH.
 - The participants were so pleased with the knowledge they received they surprised Edith and Yvonne with thank you letters expressing how much they appreciated this program and how it helped them.

- **Service delivery**
 - The Community Health Worker from Nutrition and a Public Health Education Specialist- both bilingual- facilitated the program.
 - Many of the participants' referrals were received via the Chronic Care Initiative Program within Nutrition. Additional recruitment efforts were made by both staff attending health fair events in the community at the Student U-600 E. Umstead St. Durham NC.
- **Staffing**
 - The Chronic Care Initiative Team is staffed with 1 English Speaking Community Health Worker and 1 Bilingual Community Health Worker. All self-management programs used require 2 staff to facilitate so we partner with Health Ed to conduct those needed for our Spanish speaking clients.
- **Revenue**
 - There is no revenue received from participants or grant funds supporting this program.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- DCoDPH's community health workers within the CCI program will continue to work with Health Ed to complete the required instructor training and refreshers to be able to support the facilitation of self-management educational programs.
- Community outreach will continue to be used to recruit participants and inform the community of this available resource.
- DCoDPH will continue to assess how we can recruit more bilingual staff to ensure support for the facilitation of these programs to more residents.
- An in-person program will continue to be offered for those that cannot navigate virtually to ensure all in need have access to the program. If unable to attend in person, we can work with the Nutrition Clinic and refer to other supportive one-on-one services.

Below are pictures from graduation day. Staff met participants to walk in the park, congratulate them on completing the program and provide certificates. Participants also received Spanish educational resources such as the Living Well with Diabetes book and DVD, glucose monitor, list of Durham County resources and other tools to sustain what they had learned.



Division / Program: Pharmacy/ Medication Drop Box

(Accreditation Activity 10.1 -The local health department shall develop, implement, and evaluate population-based health promotion/disease prevention programs and materials for the general public.)

Program description

- On March 15, 2018, the DCoDPH Pharmacy partnered with Project Pill Drop to install a Medication Drop Box in the lobby of the HHS building.

Statement of goals

- To offer a safe method of disposal for unused and expired over the counter and prescriptions medications.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - The following items are accepted in the box:
 - Over-the-counter medications
 - Prescription medications
 - Prescription patches
 - Prescription ointments
 - Vitamins
 - Reduce environmental concerns caused by flushing unwanted medications.
 - Alleviate prescription drug abuse from expired medications left in medicine cabinets.
 - Medication drop-off is available during the hours of operation for the HHS building.

- **Challenges**
 - Ensuring that used needles and syringes are not deposited in the drop box. The needle/syringe disposal box is located next to the medication drop box.

Implications

- **Outcomes**
 - Quarterly statistics, FY23-24 Q1
 - ~30 lbs. of medication disposed
 - Year-to-date statistics, FY23-24
 - ~30 lbs. of medication disposed
 - Previous year statistics, FY22-23
 - ~220 lbs. of medication disposed
- **Service delivery**
 - Planning and implementation were completed by the Pharmacy Manager and Allied Health Division Director.
 - General Services installed the drop box in the HHS lobby with input from Security and General Services.
- **Staffing**
 - Pharmacy staff will regularly monitor the drop box and empty it when necessary.
 - Trilogy MedWaste Southeast, LLC is contracted to dispose of the medications.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies:

- The drop box will be monitored regularly and emptied when necessary.
- Statistics will be monitored and reported to the Board of Health quarterly.

Division / Program: Pharmacy / Needle Disposal Box

(Accreditation Activity 10.1 -The local health department shall develop, implement, and evaluate population-based health promotion/disease prevention programs and materials for the public.)

Program description

- In September 2018, DCoDPH Pharmacy installed a Needle Disposal Box in the lobby of the HHS building. In June 2020, the box was relocated to the pharmacy sub-lobby.

Statement of goals

- To offer a safe method of disposal for used or expired needles and syringes.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - The following items are accepted in the box:
 - Used or expired needles and syringes
 - Used or expired medications with attached needles (i.e., EpiPens)
 - Reduce environmental concerns caused by improper needle disposal.
 - Reduce accidental needle sticks caused by improper needle disposal.
 - Reduce the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C by disposing of needles after each use coupled with offering new needles, syringes, and injection supplies through the Safe Syringe Program.
 - Reduce the risk of staff needlesticks by providing sharps containers to *all* clients prior to needles being deposited in Needle Disposal Box (implemented August 2021).
 - Needle disposal is available during the hours of operation for the HHS building.
- **Challenges**
 - Ensure that used needles and syringes are properly discarded in a puncture proof container. Sharps containers are included with SSP kits and participants are encouraged to use them and return the container to the DCoDPH Pharmacy.
 - Ensure that used needles and syringes are not deposited in the medication drop box in the HHS lobby. Both drop boxes have clear signage in English and Spanish.

Division / Program: Pharmacy / Safe Syringe Program

(Accreditation Activity 10.1 -The local health department shall develop, implement, and evaluate population-based health promotion/disease prevention programs and materials for the general public.)

Program description

- On April 2, 2018, the DCoDPH Pharmacy launched the Safe Syringe Program based on the guidance and program requirements from the NC Division of Public Health.

Statement of goals

- To offer new needles, syringes, and injection supplies to reduce the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C in the community.
- To offer free HIV and Hepatitis C testing and follow-up care.
- To offer education, treatment information, and referrals to community members.
- To provide a safe method of disposal for used needles and syringes.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - Reduce the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C by offering new needles, syringes, and injection supplies.
 - Reduce the risk of bacterial infections (i.e., endocarditis) that occur when injection supplies are reused.

- Connect participants with community resources including treatment options, health care, and housing assistance.
- The following items are provided in the Safe Syringe Kit:
 - 10 sterile 1.0 mL syringes with fixed needles
 - 10 Alcohol swabs
 - 1 Tourniquet
 - 6 Condoms
 - Sharps Container
 - Additional injection supplies
 - Participant ID card
 - Printed material for harm reduction and ancillary services
 - Fentanyl test strips
 - Xylazine test strips
 - Naloxone kits
- Xylazine testing strips are offered in addition to the fentanyl testing strips as of September 2023.
- **Challenges**
 - Ensure that used needles and syringes are properly discarded in a puncture proof container. Sharps containers are included with SSP kits and participants are encouraged to use them and return the container to the DCoDPH Pharmacy.
 - Ensure that used needles and syringes are not deposited in the medication drop box in the HHS lobby.
 - Hours of distribution were changed effective September 06, 2022 due to conflicting demands of pharmacy operations. Staffing is now devoted to serve the SSP clients during the following specified hours:
 - Tuesday/ Thursday: 9AM – 12Noon*
 - Wednesday/ Friday: 1PM – 4PM*

Implications

- **Outcomes**
 - The following statistics have been collected for FY23-24 Q1:
 - New participants: 12
 - Total contacts: 51
 - Syringes dispensed: 301
 - Syringes returned*: ~1438
 - Sharps containers dispensed: 13
 - Fentanyl Test Strip dispensed: 93
 - Xylazine Test Strips dispensed: 24
 - Naloxone kits distributed to SSP participants: 32
 - Naloxone kits distributed non-SSP participants: 619
 - Naloxone reversals reported: 12

*“Syringes returned” metric includes needles/syringes returned directly to staff regardless of usage (i.e., substance use, medical use, prescription use)

- **How this measure is trending?**
 - The volume for total program contacts has decreased by 2 % when compared to Q4 FY23 and decreased by 41 % when compared to Q1 FY23. The volume for unique program contacts has decreased by 40 % when compared to Q4 FY23 and decreased by 33 % when compared to Q1 FY23. Possible explanations for this measure include possible stabilized community-wide access to safe syringe resources.
- **Service delivery**
 - Planning and implementation were completed by the Opioid Response Committee with guidance and support from the NC Division of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch.
- **Staffing**
 - Pharmacy and Health Education team members have received training from the NC Division of Public Health and the NC Harm Reduction Coalition regarding harm reduction strategies and Safe Syringe Program practices.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies:

- Statistics from the Safe Syringe Program will be monitored and reported to the Board of Health quarterly.
- The Opioid Response Committee will continue to work with the NC Division of Public Health to improve our program and develop strategies to further our goals.
- The DCoDPH team submitted a grant proposal to NASTAD on January 20, 2023 to request funding to expand the program and establish a dedicated Safe Syringe Program Coordinator. Unfortunately, our proposal was declined.