

Harm Reduction in New Mexico: An Integrated Public Health Response Since 1998

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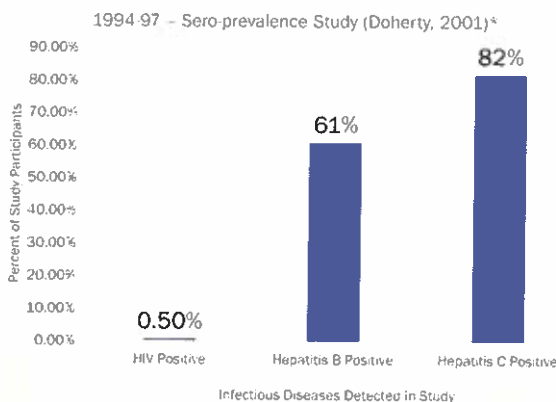


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The Urgency for Harm Reduction Programs in Public Health

- 2001 Doherty Study found greatest increase of Hepatitis C (HCV) among individuals injecting substances under age 40
- Harm reduction strategies arose from the need to address transmission of these diseases as a public health issue



*Samuel, M.C., Doherty, P.M., et al. 2001. Association between heroin use, needle sharing and tattoos received in prison with hepatitis B and C positivity among street-recruited injecting drug users in New Mexico, USA. *Epidemiological Infections*, 127, 475-484.

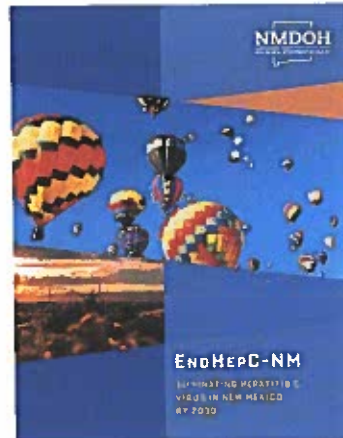


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Leadership in Elimination of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)

- Testing and treating high-risk individuals in the New Mexico prison system.
- EndHepC-NM elimination plan published in June 2022.
- Special initiative to provide health insurance coverage, approved unanimously by New Mexico Medical Insurance Pool (NMMIP) board in 2019.
- Las Cruces Public Health Office (PHO) is first to begin HCV treatment in public health.



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Harm Reduction: Prevention Services

- Syringe services (including syringe exchange)
- Overdose prevention training
- Provide syringes to people who use insulin if they cannot otherwise afford or obtain them
- HIV, HCV and other STD counseling and testing
- Adult Viral Hepatitis vaccination and testing
- Adult Viral Hepatitis surveillance
- Wound and abscess care



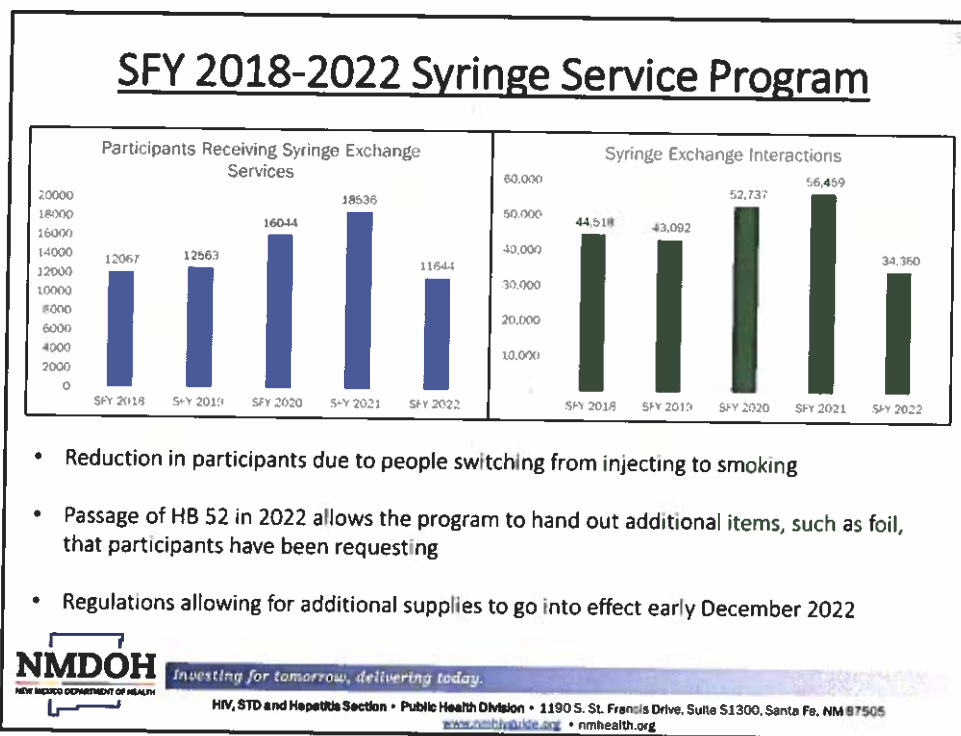
Syringe drop box at the Las Cruces Public Health Office



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Harm Reduction: Intervention Services

Harm reduction programs offer many opportunities for participants to enter treatment services:

- Community health and social service referrals
- Primary medical care referrals and direct service
- Active navigation into substance use treatment and HCV curative treatment
- Buprenorphine medication assisted treatment referrals
- Assistance in food support, substance use treatment, medical services, clothing, and housing

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Harm Reduction: Overdose Reversal Services

Harm reduction also focuses on reducing the likelihood of overdose:

- Naloxone distribution and training
- Overdose prevention training for program participants
- Overdose prevention training for law enforcement
- Providing fentanyl test strips to those most at risk



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Harm Reduction: Partnering with Law Enforcement

Successful harm reduction is made possible by strong partnerships with law enforcement:

- New Mexico was the first US state to require officers to carry naloxone
 - HB 370 was passed in 2017 by Rep. Sarah Maestas Barnes, Rep. Rebecca Dow, and Rep. Derrick J. Lente
- Naloxone statewide standing orders for law enforcement were implemented by NMDOH
- Ongoing training is offered to law enforcement regarding the New Mexico Harm Reduction Act, including the public health benefits of syringe services, overdose prevention education, and harm reduction programs



Photo by: KOAT News




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NM Overdose Trends Update

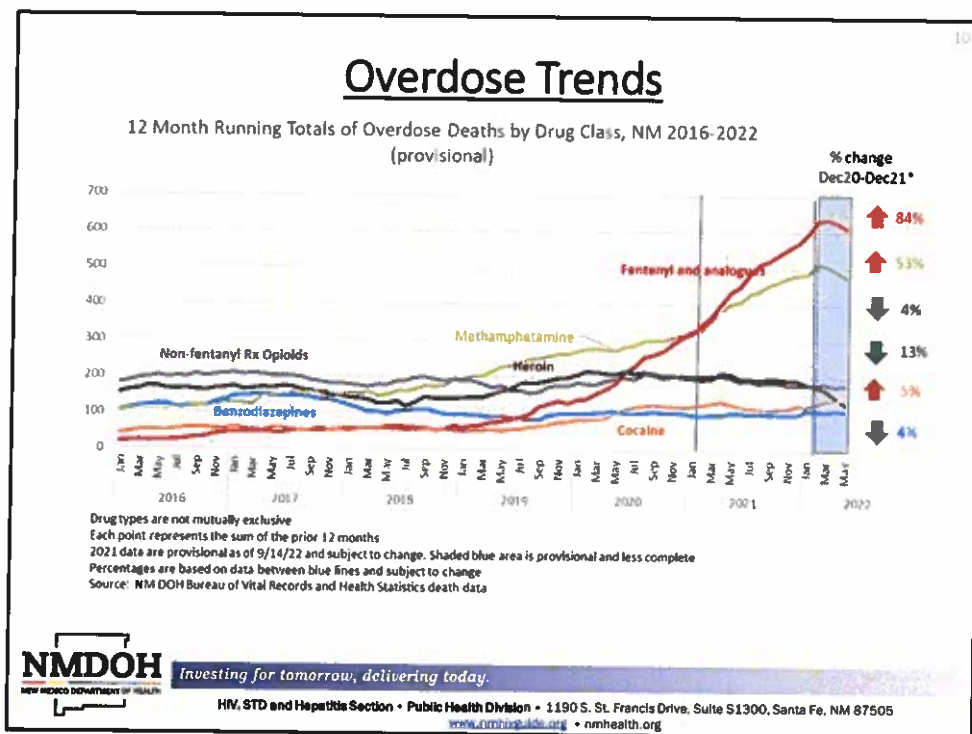


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Responding to Fentanyl

- Fentanyl is common in New Mexico
- High is stronger and shorter in duration
- Fentanyl overdose cannot happen through casual contact
- Potentially dangerous dose is dependent on number of factors
- How we are responding:
 - Naloxone and overdose prevention offered to all clients
 - Education on fentanyl potency
 - Providing fentanyl test strips
- Providing accurate information and addressing stigma



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Naloxone Distribution in SFY22

- 21,510 doses of naloxone distributed by NMDOH
- 3,421 individuals reported "OK" after a suspected opioid overdose with naloxone administered
- Provided over 50,000 fentanyl test strips since May 2022
- Based on a May 2022 point in time survey, 44% of all harm reduction program participants reversed an overdose in the past 12 months



Photo by: John Minchillo, AP



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Reducing Barriers: Teaching Points for Stigma and Awareness

- Meet people where they are
- Treat people as people
- Ask people what they need
- Use affirming language
- Mistakes happen – learn and move forward
- Active navigation/Linkage-to-Services



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Thank you & Contact Information

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