



# DHHS - Public Health Harm Reduction Syringe Services Program

DEPARTMENTAL REPORT TO HUMBOLDT COUNTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Sept. 9, 2025

# Public Health Harm Reduction Program

---



- Approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2012
- Syringe exchange and disposal
- Overdose prevention education
- Naloxone distribution
- HIV/Hepatitis C rapid testing, treatment referrals and care coordination
- Linkages to treatment for substance use disorders and mental health.

# Program Benefits

---

Syringe Services Programs (SSPs) are a public health best practice. Multiple studies show that SSPs:

- Do not increase drug use, but do increase access to drug treatment<sup>1</sup>
- Decrease incidence of HIV, hepatitis B and C and bacterial infections<sup>2</sup>
- Provide syringe disposal which reduces syringe litter<sup>3</sup>
- Provide linkages to free HIV and hepatitis C testing, and linkages to treatment<sup>5</sup>
- Provide opportunities for overdose prevention education and naloxone distribution<sup>5</sup>
- Provide important referrals for health care, mental health care, insurance and housing<sup>5</sup>
- Decreases crime in areas that have SSPs<sup>4</sup>
- Reduce needle stick injuries among police<sup>5</sup>.

# Summary of Public Health Activities 2022-2024

	2022	2023	2024
Syringes Exchanged	321,165	170,920	258,966
Client Encounters	603	882	1,915
Naloxone Kits Distributed (2 doses per kit)	3,311	3,375	2,380
OD reversals reported*	271	177	279

\*Source Public Health Harm Reduction Program: Client reported overdose reversal interventions.

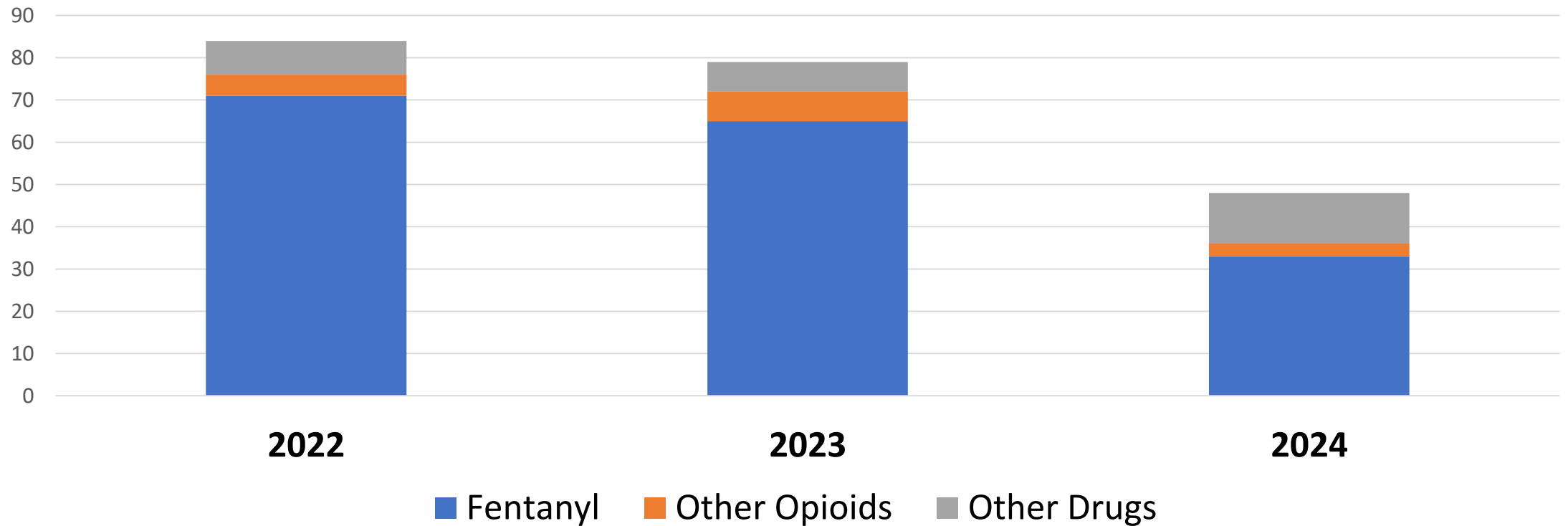
# Local Harm Reduction Programs

---

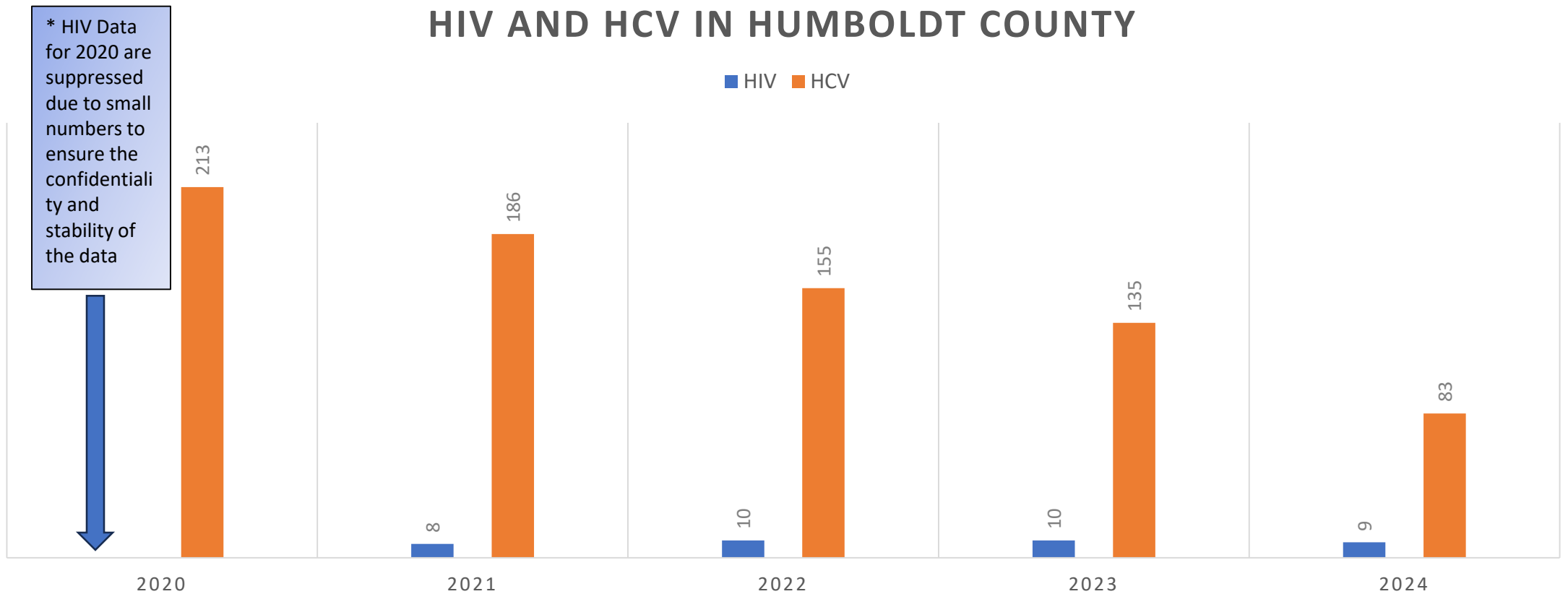
- DHHS – Public Health
- Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction (HACHR)
- Syringes are also available at:
  - Doctor's offices
  - Pharmacies
  - Online

# Why Do We Need These Services?

Overdose Deaths in Humboldt County<sup>6</sup>



# Why Do We Need These Services?



# Humboldt County Public Health Safer Injection Use Kit

- Syringes
- Biohazard disposal container
- Ties
- Alcohol wipes
- Sterile water
- Cookers
- Cottons
- Fentanyl test strips
- Xylazine test strips
- Substance Use Disorder treatment information
- Mental Health treatment information





# Safer Use (Non-Injection) Supplies: Who Are We Missing?

---

**Most Drug Users Do Not Inject:** Over 85% of people who use drugs use non-injection routes of administration<sup>7</sup>.

**Overdose Risks Differ:** While injection carries a higher risk of overdose due to rapid absorption and higher drug concentrations, most drug-related overdoses occur among non-injectors. Broader access to naloxone saves lives and prevents overdose<sup>8</sup>.

**Key Statistics:**

- In the U.S., 82% of overdose deaths involved non-injection routes<sup>9</sup>.
- In Humboldt County, over 60% of overdoses involved non-injection routes<sup>6</sup>.

**Call to Action:** Harm reduction strategies must expand to address the needs of non-injecting drug users to reduce overdose deaths effectively<sup>8</sup>.

# Van Voices, June 2025

---

“Would the availability of safer smoking kits, or other alternatives to injection supplies **reduce** your IV drug use?”



**52% said YES**

N=97

“Do you know anyone who doesn’t use our services now, who *would* use them if we provided smoking/snorting supplies?”



**60% said YES**

N=104

# Benefits of Non-Injection Supplies for Harm Reduction<sup>10</sup>

---

- Engages the missing 85%+ of people who use drugs but don't inject
- Reduces overdoses
- Reduces syringe waste
- Reduces infection, diseases and hospitalizations
- More opportunities to connect people with harm reduction education, linkage to recovery, other care services and community support
- Reduces harm among people who inject drugs.

Public Health plans to start distributing  
non-injection supplies Fall 2025

# Syringe Disposal Kiosks Near You!

---

**More than half of the syringes collected are via DHHS's disposal kiosks**

Anyone can dispose of their used syringes in these kiosks, at any time of day or night, at the following locations:

529 I St., Eureka

929 Koster St., Eureka (drive-up)

720 Wood St., Eureka (drive-up on I Street side of building)

727 Cedar St., Garberville

1615 Heartwood Drive, McKinleyville (drive-up)

Other disposal options (with limited hours of operation):

Humboldt Waste Management, Eureka

McKinleyville Transfer Station

Eel River Recology, Fortuna

Eureka Police Department

K'ima:w Medical Center, Hoopa





# Public Health Harm Reduction and Mobile Outreach

---



# References

---

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Syringe Services Programs (SSPs). Published May 2, 2024. Accessed August 26, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/syringe-services-programs/php/>
2. Des Jarlais DC. Reducing HIV and HCV transmission among injecting drug users in New York. Presented at: International Harm Reduction Conference; May 11-15, 2008; Barcelona, Spain. Presented virtually.
3. Turner KME, Hutchinson S, Vickerman P, et al. The impact of needle and syringe provision and opiate substitution therapy on the incidence of hepatitis C virus in injecting drug users: pooling of UK evidence. *Addiction*. 2011;106(11):1978-1988. doi:10.1111/j.1360-0443.2011.03515.x.
4. Center for Innovative Public Policies. *Needle Exchange Programs: Is Baltimore a Bust?* Tamarac, FL: Center for Innovative Public Policies; April 2001.
5. Groseclose SL, Weinstein B, Jones TS, Valleroy LA, Fehrs LJ. Impact of increased legal access to needles and syringes on practices of injecting-drug users and police officers—Connecticut, 1992-1993. *J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr Hum Retrovirol*. 1995;10(1):82-89.
6. Humboldt County Public Health. Epidemiology data dashboard. Published 2022-2024. Accessed August 26, 2025. [Live Well Humboldt](#)
7. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; 2011. Available at: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHresults2010/NSDUHresults2010.htm>. Accessed August 26, 2025
8. Tanz LJ, Gladden RM, Dinwiddie AT, et al. Routes of drug use among drug overdose deaths – United States, 2020-2022. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2024;73(6):124-130. doi:10.15585/mmwr.mm7306a2.
9. Megerian CE, Bair L, Smith J, Browne EN, Wenger LD, Guzman L, Kral AH, Lambdin BH. Health risks associated with smoking versus injecting fentanyl among people who use drugs in California. *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2024;255:111053. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2023.111053.
10. Megerian CE, Bair L, Smith J, et al. Health Risks Associated with Smoking versus Injecting Fentanyl among People Who Use Drugs in California. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. 2024;255:111053-111053. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2023.111053>