



## Quality and Performance Measures (QPM) Team

Meeting Notes / July 15, 2020

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### Meeting Notes

**Participants:** Clifford Batson, Sara Burns, Sabrina Delgado, Christina Del Vecchio, Luis Diaz, Shannon Francis, Alison Fulton, Miguel Gonzalez, Juan Hernandez, Clunie Jean-Baptiste, Dionne Kotey, Susan Major, Consuelo Muñoz, Mitchell Namias, Peta-Gaye Nembhard, Manuel Orellana, Rosie Rodriguez, Ramón Rodriguez-Santana, Donna Sciacca, Idiana Velez, Danielle Warren-Dias

**Facilitator:** Nilda Fernandez

**Recorder:** Dave Bechtel

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### Meeting Accomplishments

The team accomplished the following tasks:

- Ramón Rodriguez-Santana presented the latest data on the Syringe Services Program (SSP). In 2019, SSP distributed more than 1 million syringes, trained over 1,700 SSP clients in overdose (OD) prevention, and distributed more than 1,700 OD Kits that resulted in 274 OD reversals.

### Identified Tasks

- Mr. Rodriguez-Santana will check what demographic data is available on OD reversals, and will present SSP data for Blacks / African-Americans.

### Next Meeting

- August 19, 2020 at 11:15 a.m. virtual meeting
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### Welcome

DAC co-chair Nilda Fernandez welcomed everyone to the online meeting of the Quality and Performance Measures (QPM) Team at 11:17 am. QPM reviews and discusses data, develops indicators to track progress in HIV prevention and care, and seeks to improve the quality of HIV prevention and care.

Ms. Fernandez reminded the team about the approach for our online meetings:

- We are using Gotomeeting so we can see people's faces (if you're willing to turn your camera on).
- Please mute your audio during the presentation.
- We will use both the Chat box and unmute people to have our discussion today. Please raise your hand if you want to ask a question or share a comment. We'll try to make sure everyone who wants has a chance to speak.



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Participants introduced themselves and provided feedback on the June QPM meeting notes. Participants approved the notes by consensus (i.e., thumbs up).

### Update from June Meeting

Dave Bechtel provided a brief update on tasks from the June 2020 meeting:

- The June presentation on “Housing During COVID” by Melanie Alvarez has been shared with the full CHPC via InfoShare, on the [CHPC website](#), and will be featured in the CHPC newsletter.
- UConn / CCMC is going to pilot-test HIV Stigma Scale with clients.

### Syringe Services Program (SSP) Presentation

Ramón Rodriguez-Santana presented the latest data on Connecticut’s Syringe Services Program (SSP). Mr. Rodriguez-Santana dedicated the presentation to his former colleague, Pamela Foster.

Highlights from the presentation included:

- **Programs.** In 2019, there were 13 agencies with SSP programs in Connecticut. Programs operated in 15 cities and towns throughout Connecticut, with multiple locations in many cities.
- **Clients.** In 2019, SSPs served 4,428 clients, a 112% increase from 2013. Half of all SSP clients (50%) come from the 06106 (Hartford), 06457 (Middletown), and 06513 (New Haven) zip codes. Approximately 49% of clients were white, 32% Hispanic / Latinx, and 14% Black / African-American.
- **Testing.** In 2019, only 19% of clients had been tested for HIV within in the past year and 18% for Hepatitis C. Mr. Rodriguez-Santana noted that we need to increase testing.
- **Syringe Distribution.** For the first time, SSPs distributed over 1 million syringes in 2019. From 2018 (631,470) to 2019 (1,137,746), we had an 80% increase in number syringes distributed.
- **Substance Use.** Primary substances used were heroin (80%), crack cocaine (15%), and cocaine (4%). Primary substance used routes were IV arm (80%), smoke (14%), and snort (1.6%). Primary substance used frequencies were ‘1 to 3 times per day’ (55%), ‘4 to 6 times per day’ (29%) and ‘7 to 9 times per day’ (5.3%).
- **Overdose (OD) Prevention.** In 2019, 1,742 (39%) SSP clients were trained in OD prevention, 1,714 OD kits were distributed, and 274 OD kits were used to reverse an overdose.
- **New HIV Diagnoses.** New HIV diagnoses by PWID (people who inject drugs) has decreased dramatically from 2002 (321 cases) to 2018 (13 cases). Mr. Rodriguez-Santana noted that we need to continue monitoring and testing to ensure that these trends continue, especially given the increase in overdoses in Connecticut in recent years.
- **Next Steps.** Mr. Rodriguez-Santana noted the following next steps for SSP:



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- Continue to recruit new clients to SSPs, expand to suburbs and rural areas, and work with SSP clients on overdose prevention.
- Increase HIV testing among SSP clients using 'INSTI' one-minute test and increase Hep C testing using new methods.
- SSP has a new data collection system, E2CTPrevention, that will include additional data on referrals and outcomes.
- The 2019 Two-Page SSP Report will be completed in September, 2020.

Ms. Fernandez facilitated a discussion of on the presentation, using **questions and comments** submitted via the Chat box.

Danielle Warren-Dias. It looks like Black folk are the least served in these services as well. Why is that?

- Mr. Rodriguez-Santana agreed that we need to do a better job. The Greater Hartford Harm Reduction Coalition and ACT reach many African-Americans in Hartford. We also need to do a better job of communicating that SSPs are not just for PWID.

Peta-Gaye Nembhard. What do you think contributes to that huge spike in syringes collected?

- We have new locations, an increase in the number of sites, and more secondary distribution.

Danielle Warren-Dias. What are the demographics on the overdose reversals?

- Mr. Rodriguez-Santana will check what demographic data is available.

Donna Sciacca. One concern I have is the likely higher Hep C infection rate among people. I suspect many have never been tested.

- Mr. Rodriguez-Santana agreed that we need to do more Hep C testing.

Danielle Warren-Dias. Black folk aren't even mentioned in the conclusions section. Juan Hernandez agreed.

- Mr. Rodriguez-Santana suggested that he can present SSP data on Blacks / African-Americans, as a supplement to this presentation.

Allison Fulton. Why was there such a big difference in syringes collected vs. distributed in 2019?

- Connecticut eliminated a previous law requiring an even exchange of syringes. Now, SSPs can give clients many syringes to distribute to others.

Peta-Gaye Nembhard. How many SSP locations are there?

- It's difficult to count. Agencies may go to multiple locations within a town. The Greater Hartford Harm Reduction Coalition goes anywhere throughout the state. The Yale van makes home deliveries. The SSP staff are great outreach workers.



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Danielle Warren-Dias. I know that SSPs also connect folk to drug treatment. Can you track linkage to drug treatment through these services?

- Yes, the new data system will be able to capture the outcomes of referrals.

Dionne Kotey. How do clients self-disclose HIV/Hep status. Verbally or through forms/surveys?

- SSP clients verbally disclose to staff. Many clients have good relationships with staff.

Dave Bechtel. What is the difference between the OD Kits distributed to SSP clients and the kits distributed through community Naloxone?

- These are the same kits. They are just distributed in different ways – to SSP clients individually and via groups.

Nilda Fernandez. On the SSP clients by zip code chart, there did not seem to be many clients from the North End of Hartford. Why is that? As with other discussions (e.g., PrEP), it seems like we are missing key populations.

- There appear to be fewer PWID in this neighborhood; it's mainly crack-smoking individuals.

Mitchell Namias, Luis Diaz, Juan Hernandez, and Consuelo Muñoz thanked Ramón for a great presentation. Mr. Namias noted that everyone needs to see this presentation.

### Meeting Feedback

Ms. Fernandez thanked everyone for their participation, and asked participants to share feedback on the meeting. Comments and suggestions included:

- Continue to have one main presentation per meeting.
- Continue to have video options for everyone.
- Ms. Nembhard asked when there would be an update on progress towards our goals? Mr. Bechtel stated that Sue Speers would be presenting on the CHPC Indicators at the August meeting.

### Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:07 pm.

### Feedback via Chat

- Danielle Warren-Dias: I like the option to see everyone.
- Dionne Kotey: I like being able to see everyone.
- Juan Hernandez: I enjoyed everything. I was looking forward to this type of info. Thank you.
- Donna Sciacca: I think all the data presented was very useful within the community!
- Allison Fulton: Thank you for letting me attend. I hope that someone from the 5 regional RBHAs will be able to attend in the future! Great info - well run meeting!

##End QPM Notes##