

NC Department of Health and Human Services

Harm Reduction Overview from Region V: North Carolina

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Division of Public Health

Injury and Violence Prevention Branch

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North Carolina
Injury & Violence
PREVENTION Branch

2016: Syringe Services Programs Legalized

- **NCGS § 90-113.27 legalized “syringe exchange programs” (also known as syringe services programs or SSPs), effective July 2016**
- **Any governmental or nongovernmental organization “that promotes scientifically proven ways of mitigating health risks associated with drug use and other high-risk behaviors” can start an SSP**
- **Limited immunity for employees, volunteer, and participants**



Syringe Services Programs are an opportunity to engage with active drug users about their health.

Syringe Exchange Overview

- Legalized in NC **July 11, 2016**
- NC's law is broad and permissive; provides latitude for diverse programs.
- DPH (IVPB) responsible for registration & reporting under the law
- IVPB goes beyond the letter of the law - Coordination, TA, best practices, support, engagement with people who use drugs

People who use SSPs care about their health and their friends' health.



North Carolina Safer Syringe Initiative

- **Programs register with the state**
 - Key components include distributing syringes and other supplies, syringe disposal, naloxone access, education (overdose and infectious disease prevention), and referrals to substance use treatment and mental health as needed
 - Safety plan shared with local law enforcement
 - Participant cards for limited immunity
- **Annual reporting to Division of Public Health required**
- **Technical assistance provided to new and existing programs**

NCHRC SSP

Participant Card:



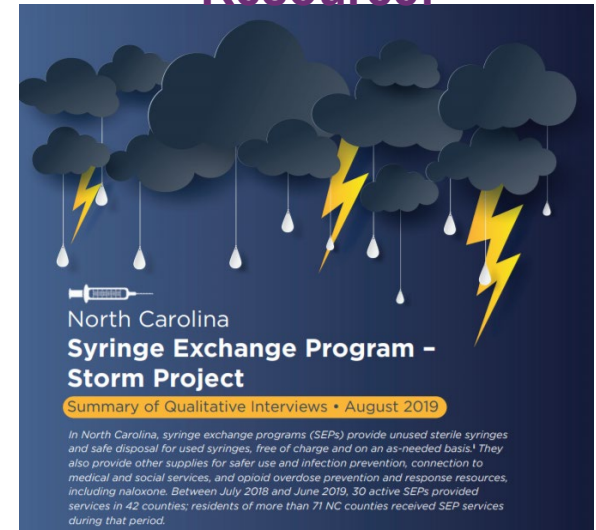
#NCSYRINGEACCESS
PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION CARD

CLIENT ID: _____

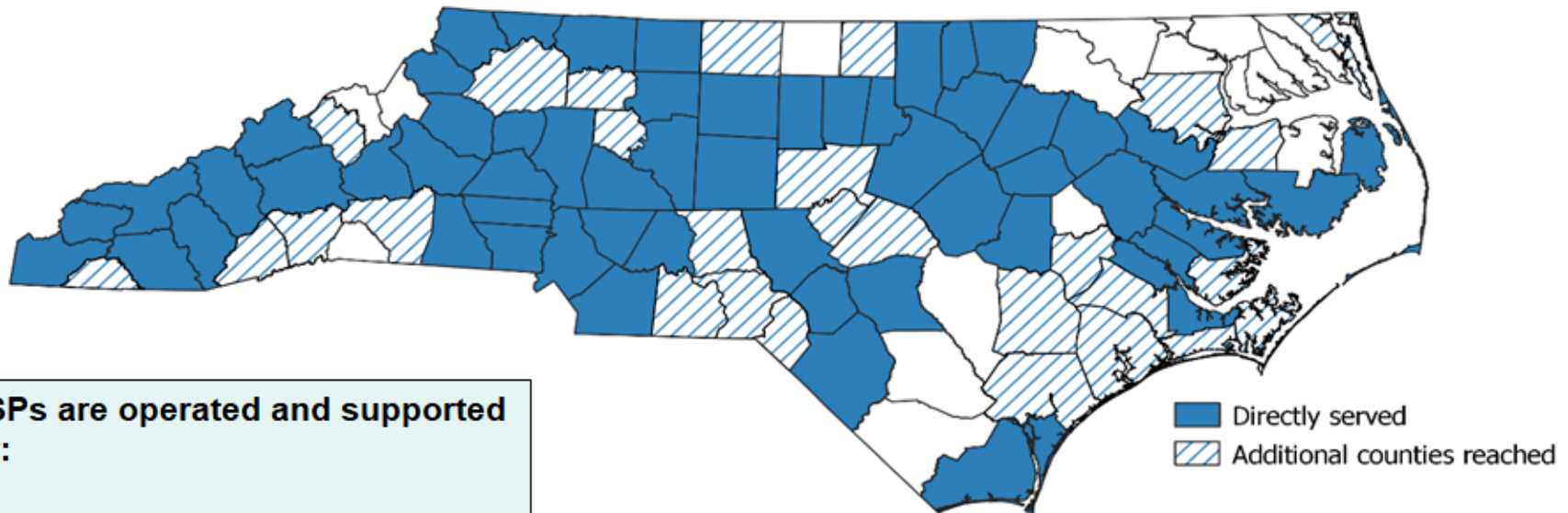
DATE ISSUED: _____

LAW ENFORCEMENT The carrier of this card is an active participant in a certified, North Carolina-approved syringe access program as specified in NC G.S. 90-113.27. As such, the carrier of this card is exempt from arrest, charge, and prosecution for the possession of injection devices. Possession of syringes, obtained from the NCHRC to reduce the spread of HIV and other bloodborne pathogens, is authorized by law.

Example NCSI Resource:



NC Counties Served or Reached by Registered Syringe Services Programs, 2020-2021



SSPs are operated and supported by:

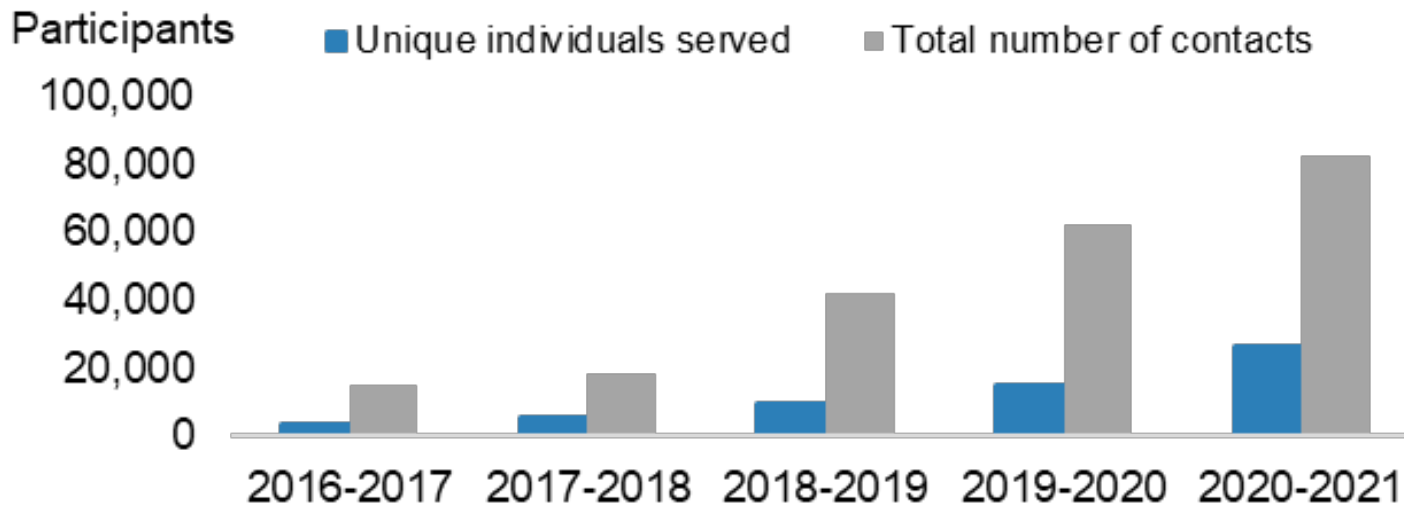
- Community-based organizations
- Local health departments
- Faith-based organizations
- Health systems
- SUD treatment providers
- AIDS service organizations
- First responders
- Directly impacted people

For a continuously updated list of registered SSPs, visit

<https://tinyurl.com/NCSSIList>

North Carolina Safer Syringe Initiative 2020-2021 SSP Participants

Individuals Served and Total Contacts by SSPs



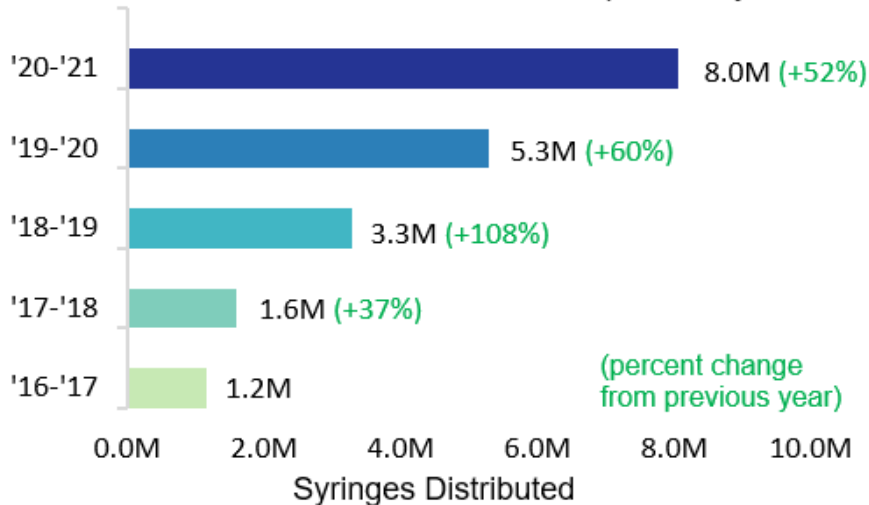
- The number of unique individuals served across all programs was **26,596** -- an **increase of 73%** since the last reporting year.
- Programs had **82,071** total contacts* with participants in the 2020-2021 reporting year. This represents an **increase of 32%** from the previous year.

*A contact can be any interaction with a participant that provides connection to harm reduction or overdose prevention services.

North Carolina Safer Syringe Initiative 2020-2021 Supply Distribution

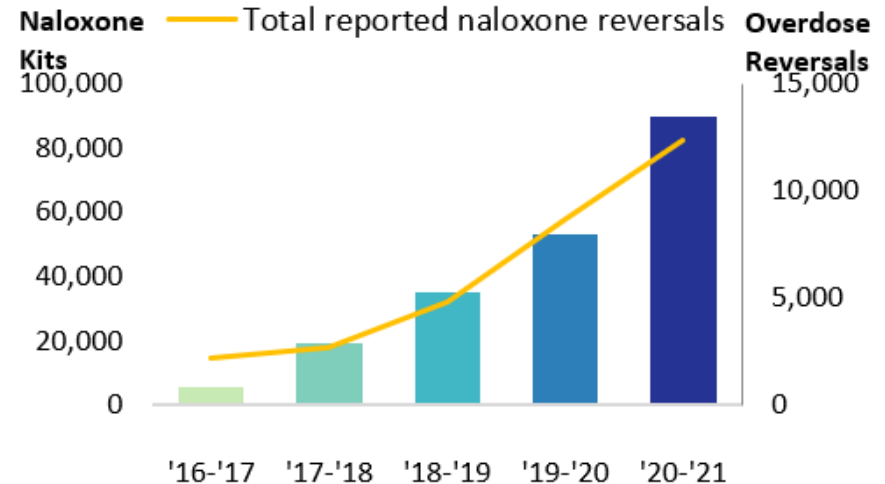
SSPs distributed over **8 million** syringes in the 2020-2021 reporting year.

This is an **increase of over 52%** from the previous year.



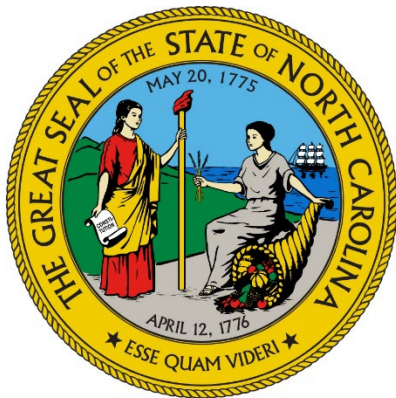
SSPs distributed over **89,500** naloxone kits in the 2020-2021 reporting year.

This is an **increase of over 69%** from the previous year.



12,392 reported reversals is an **increase of over 43%** from the previous year. This number is also likely an underestimate of the total overdose reversals done by SSP participants, as many are never reported.

Questions & Discussion



Thank you!

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