

Date Approved: 2-27-2024
Presiding Officer: Ann E. Wolum

Hancock County ADAMHS Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: January 23, 2024

Meeting Time: 3:31 p.m. – 4:55 p.m.

Meeting Location: Blanchard Valley Center – 1700 East Sandusky Street

Recorder: Amy Beach

Board Member Attendance:

x	Ann Wolum, Board Chair (phone)		Brandon Daniels		Susan Pancake
x	Jim Darrach, Vice Chair	x	Mary Beth Dillon	x	Cheryl Lentz
x	Melanie Aldobaiki		John Drymon	x	Mark Rimelspach
x	Dave Beach	x	Rick Eakin	x	Aaron Weare
x	Susan Bunn	x	Josh Eberle		Micah Zinna
x	Jim Stahl	x	Rachael Helms	x	Rick Walter

Guests Attending:

x	Precia Stuby		Cheryl Preston	x	Victoria Graham
x	Rob Verhoff	x	Zach Thomas	x	Michelle McGraw
X	Jennifer Swartzlander	x	John Bindas	x	Jen Loera
x	Deb Twining	x	Derek Puchta	x	Amy Beach
x	Aly Casto				

Board Vice Chair, Jim Darrach, called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. Amy Beach introduced guests in attendance.

PROGRAM

Jim introduced Rob Verhoff, Fiscal Director of the Hancock County ADAMHS Board to present on the board Financial State of the State. Rob began with a historical forecast. He shared data beginning in FY'21, looking at revenue and expenses throughout the fiscal year at three different times. Both revenue and expenses have been the lowest in July of each year from FY'21-current. Then, both revenue and expenses continue to rise as we reach December, which is the midpoint and they finally reach their peak in June, which is the end of each fiscal year. This is because we receive grant money throughout the year that increases our revenue but in turn increases our expenses as we distribute those funds throughout the community.

Rob then reviewed the history of board available funds. These can be described as "rainy day funds." In FY'21 there was a significant increase in funds due to State & Federal COVID funds that were received. Some of these were carried over to FY'22. In FY'22, the budget was approved with a \$920,000 deficit. In FY'23 the board-approved budget had a deficit of over \$800,000. The deficit decreased due to receiving more money from the state. Precia stated that some board members can be uncomfortable approving a budget with such a large deficit. Part of this is also because Rob is very conservative and only budgets funds that we know for sure are coming. There is usually money left at the end of each year that becomes available from contracts that went unspent along with new grants that can be applied for. Also of note, Rob shared that Family Resource Center had been receiving funds in the past on grants when some of the proposed positions were not filled. It was decided to change their contract to a

reimbursement type instead of performance-based for FY'23. The reconciliation for this has not happened yet as we are waiting on final financial reports from Family Resource Center, but we should be receiving those soon. We will also have \$200,000 in expenses this year for the Terry Russell Home. Precia summarized Rob's presentation by stating we are healthy financially as a board, but not growing our reserves.

The floor was opened for questions. Ann Woolum asked via phone, since we always have a deficit and COVID money is ending, what is coming down the pike? Do we know of any additional funds that will come in? Precia answered we have the state opiate dollars and levy dollars. Mark Rimelspach said it is hard to sell an increase in levy funds when we have so much grant money coming in. What do you see in the future levy wise? Precia says it will depend a lot on what grants we are able to obtain. The levy millage hasn't been increased in 20 years and it was another 20 years prior to that. Only having 1 increase in 40 years isn't too extreme so it could be an option if needed. However, we are very fortunate in that we have a variety of programming available across the spectrum. She does not see us needing to expand new programming but make our current programs better. Melanie A. asked if there is a time limit to spend money that is received? Rob answered yes. If we don't spend it in the allotted time, we must ask for a carryover. So far, with the state money they have always said yes, and we are able to carry it over to the next fiscal year. However, we generally try to spend any money received to avoid the risk of losing what we don't spend and the extra paperwork of asking for a carryover.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Vice Chair Jim Darrach stated he would let Precia Stuby discuss the Coalition on Addiction Data. Precia stated the number of prenatally exposed babies decreased in 2023 to 77. This is down from 90 the year prior. However, infants with Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) increased from 15 in 2022 to 18 in 2023. This means there is a slight increase in acuity. Suicide deaths are about the same as last year. We have not received the final numbers on overdose fatalities, but it looks like it will be less than 10. This is a very large decrease from last year that had 28 fatalities. Mark Rimelspach asked, what can we attribute the decrease in overdose fatalities to? Precia states a large part of that is the increase in availability of Narcan. Hancock Public Health (HPH) has reported an increase in the number of naloxone kits given out and there has also been an increase in the number of reversals reported. The increase in Narcan availability mixed with the programs available in our area has contributed to a decrease in overdose deaths.

It was asked if all police and sheriff deputies are carrying Narcan now? Precia states as far as she knows the sheriff's office all carry naloxone, but the police are not required to. Each individual officer can decide if they want to. All EMS and fire carry naloxone as well since they are often the first on the scene. Someone asked why don't the police require it? Precia states it has been brought up to the mayor several times. It seems to be a difference of philosophy with the police force.

Precia shared there were also some officials concerned about the SafeWorks program at HPH when they started to distribute smoking supplies without letting the ADAMHS Board, public officials or the general public know ahead of time. They have since stopped distributing smoking supplies. It was agreed by HPH that a 3-year study would be completed. They would also participate in ongoing training and in the future will not make any major changes to the SafeWorks program without full transparency with the ADAMHS Board and public officials. Narcan vending machines have also been in recent discussions. Dr. Fell at University of Findlay is a big advocate in getting these. City Mission is also interested. Jim Stahl asked if they can separate Narcan and needle syringe access. Maybe there would be more interest if it was Narcan only in the vending machines. Precia stated they are looking at the vending machines as a first aid approach. They would not have needles and syringes but other items in addition to

Narcan such as test strips, Detera bags, condoms, etc. The next harm reduction meeting is February 14, 2024, and Precia will know more then.

Jim Darrach then reported on the Family Resource Center Board Chair meeting that was held on January 22, 2024. They are still working on financial statements, but they should be completed by the end of the month. They hired a consultant, Scott Campbell, to help. Scott has a lot of experience in the mental health finance realm which will be beneficial. Staff retention has greatly improved. Brooke Nissen has been working on securing the bank loan for the annex project. Precia was disappointed with the initial CCBHC consultant for Family Resource Center from the National Council, but they responded with some additional recommendations. Family Resource Center is not ready for another consultant yet until they have their financial reporting done.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Follow up from November Board Meeting: It was asked if toxicology testing is centralized? Precia was able to find out that it is centralized at the regional level.

The Ethics Policy was distributed to all Board members to review during their own time. One of the biggest takeaways is a Board member cannot benefit financially from being on the board. Precia is also going to the board association next week where they will have Ethics training. If there are any new developments on ethics, she will bring those back with her.

The Terry Russell Home (TRH) held an open house on January 16, 2024. The home is in Fostoria, OH and is similar to an assisted living facility for those with mental illness that need 24/7 supervision. They received their occupancy permit and are currently taking applications. They are trying to get a group of individuals ready and move them in at the same time to avoid paying staff salaries for only 1 or 2 tenants. The address to TRH is 529 W. Lytle St.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) recently published a treatment improvement protocol "TIP65" titled Counseling Approaches to Promote Recovery from Problematic Substance Use and Related Issues. On page 212 of the publication, there is a section that discusses Hancock County and ROSC. Cheryl will send a link to the resource electronically.

CORRESPONDENCE

Precia shared a thank you card received from Jeff Young, Superintendent of Hancock County Education Service Center. Jeff was very appreciative of the ADAMHS Board who provided the funding for him and Dr. Hatton at Findlay City Schools to attend the School Mental Health Conference in New Orleans, LA. Precia attended the conference as well and stated the trip was a success. They are working together to bring back some of the knowledge gained to our local area.

Some members received letters from OACBHA in their board packets at tonight's meeting. These are thank you letters for contributing to the PAC. As a board, we were successful in reaching our donation goal.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- To Approve the November 28, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes

- To Approve the Program Committee Report of January 10, 2024
- To Approve the Governance Committee Report of January 17, 2024
- To Approve the Finance Committee Report of January 17, 2024, and November and December Agency Financial Pictures

Mary Beth Dillon motioned to approve all items on the consent agenda. Jim Stahl seconded. No further discussion. Motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS BROUGHT FROM COMMITTEE

- To Approve Deleting Recovery Check-up as a Required Agency Report. **Jim Darrach called for a vote. Further discussion took place and questions were answered. All were in favor. Motion passed.**
- To Approve a Notice of Award to Blanchard Valley Health Systems from the AUD grant in an amount not to exceed \$20,000. **Jim Darrach called for a vote. Further discussion took place and questions were answered. All were in favor. Motion passed.**
- To Approve April 8, 2024, as a Board Holiday. **Jim Darrach called for a vote. No questions; no further discussion. All were in favor. Motion passed.**
- To Approve the November and December Board Financial Statements. **Jim Darrach called for a vote. No questions; no further discussion. All were in favor. Motion passed.**

ACTION ITEMS BROUGHT TO THE FULL BOARD

- To Approve a Notice of Award to Family Resource Center for The Steady Path in the Amount of \$12,140.73. **Josh Eberle moved to approve the notice of award. Jim Stahl seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried.**

INFORMATION REPORTS

- Coalition on Addiction Chair Meeting Report of December 15, 2023
- Community Partnership Meeting Report of January 16, 2024
- The Delegation Meeting Report of January 16, 2024
- Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities: Seasonal Affective Disorder

AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENT

Michelle McGraw thanked the board for continued support on behalf of Blanchard Valley Health System.

POSITIVE ACTION

Precia shared two emails she has received recently. One from Amber Wolfrom, an FRC employee and the second from a Hancock County probation officer. They were both touching stories about clients who have received services at The Steady Path and FRC. They served as confirmations that the work being done is important and making a difference in people's lives. Precia passed these stories along to the folks at Bureau of Justice Assistance so they could hear about the significance of the grant dollars that we receive. They asked Precia if it was okay to share these stories nationally with their contacts, which Precia agreed.

FOLLOW-UP NEEDED:

Precia will inform board members, once it has been decided, how the \$20,000 in AUD funds awarded to Blanchard Valley will be spent.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Aaron Weare to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the personnel evaluation of Precia Stuby. Jim Stahl seconded the motion. Motion carried. A roll call vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Jim Stahl made a motion to close the Executive Session. Rick Walter seconded the motion. Motion carried.

There was no additional action taken after the Executive Session.

Jim Stahl made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Aaron Weare seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

The next Board meeting will be February 27, 2024.

Program Committee Meeting Report

Meeting Date: February 14, 2024

Meeting Time: 4:08 p.m. – 5:14 p.m.

Meeting Location: ADAMHS Board

Recorder: Jennifer Swartzlander

Committee Members Attending:

	Brandon Daniels, Committee Chair	X	Susan Pancake, Committee Vice Chair
	Cheryl Lentz	X	Dave Beach
	Susan Bunn		Rachael Helms
	Micah Zinna		

Board Members Attending:

X	Ann Woolum, Board Chair	X	Jim Darrach, Board Vice Chair
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Invited Staff Attending:

X	Precia Stuby		Zach Thomas	X	Jennifer Swartzlander
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Items Discussed:

- FY'24 2nd Quarter Scorecard Review-** Jennifer reviewed the FY24 Q2 Scorecard and the Weighted Reports for Focus and NAMI.
- Draft FY'25 Allocations Process** – Precia reviewed the proposed draft for the allocation process. Susan recommended that all agency presentations should be offered on one day, she suggested June 12th. Ann recommended the Governance Committee switch their meeting from June 12th to June 18th so there are not 2 meetings on the same day.
- The LOFT Project Update** – Focus is interviewing architects, once picked the bank will order the appraisals. Once appraisals are done, the state will finalize the project agreement. Old Fort is the bank they are working with on the project.
- Draft Plan for Maternal and Child Health** – Jennifer reviewed the draft plan that was created in collaboration with approximately 30 community stakeholders representing the Blanchard Valley Hospital and outpatient offices, juvenile court, children protective services, behavioral health agencies, Hancock Public Health, etc.
- School and Mental Health Draft Vision Statement** – Precia shared the meeting happened and there are 4 priorities being drafted which include mental health literacy, promotive/protective literacy, resource mapping, and working together on tier 3 youth. The goal is for all the schools and Board to adopt it by the end of the school year. After adopted by all, committees will be developed to carry out the activities.

Action Items: NA

To do List:

- Modify the allocation process draft per committee recommendation to be reviewed by the other Board Committees.

Governance Committee Meeting Report

Meeting Date: February 21, 2024

Meeting Time: 8:00 a.m. – 9:10 a.m.

Meeting Location: Board Office, 438 Carnahan Avenue

Recorder: Precia Stuby

Committee Members Attending:

x	John Drymon, Committee Chair	x	Jim Stahl
	Mary Beth Dillon, Committee Vice Chair	x	Melanie Aldobaiki

Board Members Attending:

x	Ann Woolum, Board Chair	x	Jim Darrach, Board Vice Chair
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Invited Staff Attending:

x	Precia Stuby	x	Jennifer Swartzlander
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Items Discussed:

1. Capital Ad Hoc Committee Update – Jennifer reported that the 15-year warranty for the roof has been secured. Representative Cross has included \$200,000 in the proposed state capital budget for the project vs. an earmark. An earmark application is being submitted to Senator McColley. It won't be acted upon until at least April.
2. Board Telephone System – Precia informed the Committee that the telephone system at the Board office needs to be replaced. Board staff are in the process of reviewing what is currently available and obtaining quotes. A summary of the findings will be brought back to the Committee for discussion next month. A new phone system will need to be in place no later than July 1st.
3. Board Meeting Evaluation Results for January 2024 – There was some discussion regarding confusion over executive sessions. It was determined to add this to the Board Chair report and have John Drymon give a brief overview. Results regarding Agency visits were positive. Precia reminded Committee members the March Committee meeting will be at Family Resource Center.
4. Revision of Bylaws Update – John has completed the first draft and needs to review it with Mary Beth. John requested a copy of the ORC changes approved in the recent state budget.
5. Board Strategic Planning Process/Timeline – The Committee is interested in extending the April Board meeting to complete the strategic planning process. It was recommended that Cheri Walter from the Board Association be approached about facilitating.

6. FY'25 Draft Allocation Process – The Committee had no recommended changes to the proposed process.
7. Executive Director Performance Evaluation Recommendation to Finance Committee

Action Items:

1. The Committee recommends to the Finance Committee an annual increase of \$4,000 for the Executive Director, retrospective to January 1, 2024.

To Do List:

1. Precia will send John Drymon information on the executive sessions from the Directors Handbook.
2. Precia will send John Drymon the changes to the Ohio Revised Code approved with the state budget bill.
3. Precia will contact Cheri Walter at the Board Association regarding her availability to assist with strategic planning.

Postscript:

It was noted after the meeting that the April Board meeting falls on the same day as the annual Trauma Informed Care Conference. Board staff will recommend moving the Board meeting in April to the 5th Tuesday, April 30, 2024.

Finance Committee Meeting Report

Meeting Date: February 21, 2024

Meeting Time: 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: Putnam Room

Recorder: Rob Verhoff

Committee Members Attending:

X	Josh Eberle, Comm. Chair	X	Mark Rimelspach, Comm. Vice-Chair	X	Rick Eakin
	Aaron Weare	X	Rick Walter		

Invited Board Leadership Attending:

X	Ann Woolum, Board Chair	X	Jim Darrach, Board Vice Chair
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Invited Staff Attending:

X	Precia Stuby	X	Rob Verhoff	X	Deb Twining
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Guests Attending via zoom:

X	John Bindas	X	Charles Buck	X	Scott Campbell
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Items Discussed:

1. Family Resource Center Update – John Bindas reported Family Resource Center has contracted with Scott Campbell to serve as Finance Director. In addition, a Senior Accountant has been hired and interviews have been completed for a Controller. Family Resource Center's FY'23 audit is nearing completion as they are waiting on audit adjustments before producing financial statements for FY'24. They expect the audit to be finalized by the end of March and monthly financial statements produced by the end of April. In the meantime, they will provide a draft financial statement to the board. The cash position of the agency remains strong.

The primary issue for the delay is complications with the implementation and subsequent lack of utilization of full automation of the SAGE financial software system due to a manual approach used by the prior Chief Financial Officer and key senior staff turnover.

There was a discussion regarding the upcoming 120 Notice Letters related to contracting with the Board. It was determined that the letter should outline concerns regarding financial reporting and that financial reporting will be a required condition for contracting with the Board.

2. Family Resource Center FY'23 Reconciliation (*Tabled until financials are available.*)
3. Review of FY'25 Allocation Process Timeline - The committee recommends moving the April Board meeting to April 30th due to the conflict with the Annual Trauma Informed Care Training.
4. Recommendation from Governance Committee Regarding Executive Director Performance Evaluation – No issues identified.

5. Board Fund Policy (*Tabled*)
6. Review of Account Fund Balance and Board Financial Statements for January 2024 - No issues identified.
7. Agency Financial Report – December 2023 reports were reviewed. FRC's financials were not received. It was noted that NAMI had three consecutive months of net losses which triggers the Board's Contingency Plan Policy. NAMI's expense days covered is 140.6 days. No other issues were identified.

Action Items:

1. A motion was made by Mark Rimelspach and seconded by Rick Eakin to approve the January 2024 Board Financial Statements as presented. Motion carried.
2. A motion was made by Rick Eakin and seconded by Mark Rimelspach to approve the Governance Committee's recommendation to increase the Executive Director annual salary \$4,000, retroactive to January 1, 2024. Motion carried.
3. A motion was made by Mark Rimelspach and seconded by Rick Walter to approve sending Family Resource Center's 120-day notice letter with a listing of all the board's concerns regarding Family Resource Center finances. The Board Chair will review the letter prior to it being sent. Motion carried.
4. A motion was made by Mark Rimelspach and seconded by Rick Walter to approve waiving the contingency plan policy of three consecutive months of losses for NAMI if its cash balance covers over 100 days of expenses. Motion carried.

To Do List:

1. Revisions to the Allocations Process will be completed prior to the Board meeting.
2. Precia will prepare the 120 Notice Letter for Family Resource Center and have it reviewed by the Board Chair.

The Community Partnership believes that if substance use prevention and mental health promotion strategies are implemented, then the overall health and quality of life in Hancock County will be improved.

Council Meeting Report

Date: February 20, 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Location: ADAMHS Office

Representatives (Attendees in **BOLD**)

SECTOR	REPRESENTATIVE
BUSINESS	<u>Michelle Ladd (Chamber of Commerce)</u>
CIVIC/VOLUNTEER GROUP	<u>Kim Hiatt (50 North)</u> , <u>Kaleb Brown (United Way)</u>
GOVERNMENT AGENCY	<u>Shawn Carpenter (Juvenile Court)</u>
HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL	<u>Jenn Reese (BVHS)</u>
LAW ENFORCEMENT	<u>Brian White, Vice-Chair (FPD)</u>
MEDIA	<u>Mary Jane Yarris (Retired)</u> , <u>Cheryl Miller (Hancock Public Health)</u>
OTHER ORGANIZATION	Triena Miller (JFS), Erin Mitchell (Lutheran Social Services), <u>Brooke Nissin (FOCUS)</u>
PARENT	<u>Rob Love</u>
RELIGIOUS/FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION	
RECOVERY PEER	Abbie Acord (Peer Support Advisory Board)
SCHOOL	Stefan Adams (FCS), <u>Jodi Firsdon, Chair (UF)</u> , <u>Angie Toland (ESC)</u>
YOUNG ADULT 18-25	
YOUTH	
YOUTH SERVING ORGANIZATION	<u>Stacy Shaw, Chair (CMC)</u> , <u>Chris Biltz (FRC)</u> , Abby Blanchard (FRC)
BOARD/COALITION	Ann Woolum (ADAMHS Vice-Chair), Jim Darrach (ADAMHS Vice-Chair), Debra Parker (UF), Mark Rimelspach (ADAMHS)
STAFF	<u>Zach Thomas, Steve Dillon, Aly Casto, Jennifer Swartzlander</u>
GUESTS	Tara Hogrefe, Amy Miller (St. Andrew's UMC), <u>Caitlin Biblac</u> , <u>Rosalia Preciado</u>

DISCUSSION:

- Celebrations, Challenges, and Concerns.** Aly Casto updated the Council on her work creating the brain development curriculum. Aly will present a full review of the curriculum at the March Council meeting.
- FY25 Prevention and Wellness Grant Program.** Council members reviewed the draft of the grant program guidelines which included modifications to proposal requirements. The grant program will be launched March 1, 2024.
- A Community Position on Legal Substances.** The community position was recently updated to include language related to recreational marijuana. There has been discussion on how best to reconcile the disparity between advocating for limitations on medical dispensaries while also advocating anti-stigma messages for adults who choose to use recreational marijuana (this was also discussed at length at the recent Community Awareness Committee meeting [Coalition on Addiction]). Staff will prepare revised language that will attempt to address these concerns. The community position is being reviewed by all Coalition on Addiction committees.
- SAMHSA Prevention Grant.** The ADAMHS Board submitted a federal grant to SAMHSA that would support the expansion of universal prevention initiatives. The grant, if awarded, would provide \$375K per year, for five years. The project abstract is attached for reference.
- School-Based Prevention Metrics.** Chris Biltz shared the latest data on how many youth and adults have received prevention services from Family Resource Center. In FY24 Q2 (Oct – Dec), over 5500 community members received some level of prevention services.

6. **Sheriff Heldman Community Event – *Creating Community for a Better Tomorrow* (4.4.24).** The event will focus on vaping with Jamie Belcher (tobacco cessation lead, health educator from Sandusky County Health Department) serving as the keynote speaker. Council members are encouraged to share information about the event.
7. **Coordinator's Updates.**
 - a. FY24 Prevention & Wellness Grant Program mid-year reports have been received. All are on track to complete program goals by the end of FY24.
 - b. The Suicide Prevention Committee will be reviewing the new Suicide Prevention Plan for Ohio (2024-2026), to inform local work and modify the current workplan.

ACTION TAKEN DURING MEETING:

1. Mary Jane Yarris – Motion to Approve January 2024 meeting report. Shawn Carpenter – Second. Motion carried.
2. Shawn Carpenter – Motion to allocate funds (up to \$3000) for the purchase of a new fair booth backdrop display. Jenn Reese – Second. Motion carried.
3. Chris Biltz – Motion to allocate funds (up to \$15000) for the FY25 Prevention & Wellness Grant Program, with grant awards not exceed \$5000. Brian White – Second. Motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

1. Order new fair booth backdrop display.
2. Prepare and launch FY25 Prevention & Wellness Grant Program.
3. Prepare for review revised language regarding recreational marijuana to be included in *A Community Position on Legal Substances*.

NEXT MEETING:

March 19, 2024

9:00-10:30 a.m.

ADAMHS Office

THE DELEGATION

Report

February 20, 2024

1:00-2:00 p.m.

Lindamood Room, Findlay-Hancock County Public Library



Delegation Members (Attendees in **BOLD**)

Don Essex – <i>City of Findlay</i>	Christina Muryn – <i>City of Findlay Mayor</i>	Dionne Neubauer – Findlay-Hancock County Chamber of Commerce
John Drymon – <i>Trinity Episcopal Church</i>	Jennifer Swartzlander – <i>ADAMHS</i>	Hiro Kawamura – <i>University of Findlay</i>
Kimberly Bash – Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation	Karim Baroudi – <i>Hancock Public Health</i>	Jerome Gray – Black Heritage Library & Multicultural Center
Precia Stuby – ADAMHS	Kirby Overton – <i>University of Findlay</i>	Andy Hatton – <i>Findlay City Schools</i>
Seth Butler – <i>Independent Consultant</i>	Scott Lammers – <i>Family Resource Center</i>	Melissa LaRocco – Legal Aid of Western Ohio
Zach Thomas – ADAMHS	Steve Dillon – <i>ADAMHS</i>	Sarah Clevidence – Findlay-Hancock County Public Library
Laura Reinhart – <i>Hancock Public Health</i>	Kaylee Schleucher – <i>GSW</i>	Tommie Harner – <i>Western Ohio Foodbank</i>
Chris Caldwell – University of Findlay	Nancy Firth – <i>St. Andrew's UMC</i>	Chloe Crowther – <i>Marathon Center for the Performing Arts</i>
Peggy Dillon – <i>Findlay Hot Yoga</i>	Jaclynn Hohman – City of Findlay	Stefan Adams – <i>Findlay City Schools</i>
Jennifer Davis – Hancock Public Health/Findlay Inclusion & Awareness	Maria Guarnieri – University of Findlay	Kaleb Brown – United Way
Rene Gabriel – <i>Mission Possible</i>	Hachemy Gabriel – <i>Mission Possible</i>	Kristi Szkudlarek – <i>Findlay-Hancock County Public Library</i>
Amber Kear – <i>The Hysteria Company</i>	Gary Bright – <i>50North</i>	Sarah Perrigo – <i>Regional Growth Partnership</i>
Nichole Coleman – <i>Hancock County Veterans Service Office</i>	Aly Casto – <i>ADAMHS</i>	Dan DeArment – Findlay City Council

DISCUSSION:

1. **Celebration, Challenges, Concerns.** The following was shared by Delegation Members: Chris Caldwell, The University of Findlay will be hosting International Night on March 8, 5-9pm at Winebrenner; Sara Clevidence, the Welcome Window is installed in the Findlay-Hancock County Public Library; Dionne Neubauer, the positive notes exchange between Hancock Youth Leadership and Haitian community members was shared by Rene and Hachemy Gabriel in a recent *Ask the Expert* in The Courier; Jerome Gray, the Black Heritage Library & Multicultural Center is hosting several events throughout February in celebration of Black History Month; Hiro Kawamura, International Mother Language Day (2.21.24), Hiroshige Kate (guest artist in residence), March 6-19.
2. **Revisit *Inclusivity* Report.** The 2021 report from *Inclusivity* which summarized interviews and focus group responses regarding local views on inclusion and diversity was reviewed. The intention of the review was to discuss progress that has been made since its release, necessary modifications to the current logic model/strategic plan, and future actions that could be taken to reassess the community's positions on inclusion and diversity. Delegation members offered the following reflections: the community is making progress

in becoming more inclusive; there is much more awareness across the community and influencers outside of the delegation are assisting in creating greater awareness; this work has helped to encourage international students to become more involved in the community; the report and the Delegation has helped to increase the understanding and importance of creating safe places for discussions about inclusion and diversity, and reemphasizes the need to lead with *belonging*; the work has led to the creation of the *Inclusion Toolkit* which will help to increase belonging in workplaces through policy and practice development; collaborative efforts across the community are even stronger; there is increased awareness that focusing on *belonging* is imperative to workforce development; could the interviewees and focus groups be reconvened to measure any change.

The Delegation asked what was the end result of the restorative justice action that was taken in response to the student who defaced the Pride street painting in 2020. The Delegation suggested reaching out to Jas Bradley to find out any updates.

3. **You Belong Campaign Grant Final Reports.** A summary report will be provided to Delegation members (the grant program ended 12/31/23).

4. Workgroups

- a. **You Belong – Report from 1.22.24 Meeting.** The workgroup discussed opportunities to showcase the campaign at various events (Precia Stuby suggested connecting with the UF Honors Program for volunteers to staff table at future events); discussion on how to showcase organizations that are advancing the spirit of the campaign (annual application/You Belong Award); develop *Welcome to Findlay* videos, particularly for immigrant populations; Family Resource Center has dedicated staff member to help assist with promotion of the campaign.
- b. **Civic Engagement – Report from 2.14.24 Meeting.** The workgroup has placed emphasis on the following: developing a local leadership-related professional development course specifically on civic engagement; increase engagement with local officials; consideration to “Findlay Friendly Faces” (Chris Caldwell); revive Resolution Workgroup to develop strategy to pass resolution with City Council; develop strategy to establish a Human Rights Commission.
- c. **Health Equity – Revised Action Plan.** The Delegation was provided a copy of the updated plan for review.
- d. **Inclusion Toolkit Facilitators.** The facilitators will be meeting 2.28.24 to plan next steps toward launching the Inclusion Toolkit training series by the end of the fiscal year.

5. Immigration Task Force

- a. **Report from 2.5.24 Meeting.** At the recent Immigration Task Force meeting, participants discussed challenges, successes, and needs in the areas of language, culture, housing, transportation, and food security as it related to the immigrant populations in Findlay/Hancock County. The summary of this discussion will be

taken back to the CCE Coalition Chairs to determine a set of actions that can be led by the various community coalitions.

- b. **Community Education Program.** The Delegation has offered to take the lead in developing a community-based education series.

ACTION ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

1. Connect with Jas Bradley regarding the restorative justice action in response to the defaced Pride street painting in 2020.
2. Submit the digital version of the *Inclusivity* Report to the Delegation (with date, page numbers).
3. Provide summary of *You Belong* Campaign Grant final reports to Delegation members.

NEXT MEETING:

March 19, 2024

1:00-2:00 p.m.

Lindamood Room, Findlay-Hancock County Public Library



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Karim Baroudi, MPH, Health Commissioner



Harm Reduction and SafeWorks Program: 3-year Review

Published: February 9, 2024

Background

Hancock Public Health (HPH) began its journey within the harm reduction realm during 2014 (housed at the former Findlay City Health Department) as a Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone) location; distributing and encouraging people to carry Naloxone to save lives and prevent fatal and non-fatal opioid overdoses. HPH furthered the initiative by hiring a full-time Injury Prevention Coordinator in 2017 to: Increase awareness of Naloxone among community members; identify entities that serve people who have an increased risk of overdose (i.e., healthcare system, recovery centers, etc.) to ensure that they have the necessary resources to reduce the likelihood of overdose for their clients; partner with first responders to determine geographic areas with increased overdose activity then discuss possible mitigation opportunities to prevent overdoses; and review fatal overdoses with a committee of community partners to identify possible commonalities among the cases from a social system perspective.

HPH decided in 2020 to take the next step by hiring a Harm Reduction Coordinator/Peer Support Specialist (a person with lived experience of substance use) to accompany the Injury Prevention Coordinator in its quest to promote harm reduction and lend credibility to its practice. The agency, in April 2020, also became one (1) of 25 public health departments in Ohio to establish an anonymous Bloodborne Infectious Disease Prevention Program (now called SafeWorks) in accordance with Ohio Revised Code 3707.57. The effort of this initiative was to provide clean supplies to people who inject drugs, along with offering free bloodborne disease testing and treatment referral, to reduce the spread of Hepatitis C and HIV in the general population.

HPH expanded its harm reduction efforts again by adding a second Peer Support Specialist position in 2021 to assist the Harm Reduction Coordinator in outreach and Naloxone distribution. The agency was also a beneficiary in 2022 of a State Opioid Response (now State Opioid and Stimulant or SOS) grant via the local ADAMHS office, whereby HPH hired a full-time Suicide and Overdose Fatality Review (SOFR) Coordinator. The position completes next-of-kin interviews to gather ante-mortem information of the decedents and conducts the SOFR committee meetings, among other harm reduction responsibilities.

The following review is meant to demonstrate what has been accomplished so far by the agency's harm reduction program, challenges facing harm reduction, and opportunities for enhancing harm reduction in Findlay and Hancock County with the assistance of our community partners.



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I. Strengths / Accomplishments of the Harm Reduction Program

- a. **Program Participation:** When the SafeWorks program began in April 2020 (a month into the COVID pandemic) and it was not until the 6th month of SafeWorks' existence that it had its first participant. The remainder of the year only yielded another six (6) participants for a total of seven (7). However, this number steadily climbed in subsequent years to 44 new participants in 2021; 67 new in 2022; and 65 new in 2023 for a total of 183 active participants. Additionally, the number of visits by participants has also increased from 11 visits in 2020 to 299 visits in 2023.
- b. **Decrease in New Hepatitis C Cases:** Prior to the program's creation, Hancock County's new cases of Hepatitis C were above 100 during the previous decade. Beginning in 2020, the number of new Hepatitis C cases fell below 100 with 79 in 2020; 88 in 2021; 91 in 2022; and 64 in 2023.
- c. **Increase in Distribution of Naloxone:** HPH is the primary distributor of Naloxone in Hancock County and has done so since 2014 (when still the Findlay City Health Department). The growth in distribution has been exponential since 2018 when there was only one (1) harm reduction employee offering approximately 300 kits between the general public and first responders to greater than 3,500 kits in 2023 with three (3) harm reduction employees.
- d. **Decrease in Overdose-Related Visits to ED and Overdose-Related Deaths:** Hancock County, since 2018, has continued to trend downward in the number of overdose-related visits to the emergency department (ED), along with number of deaths certified by the coroner as overdose-related. The decrease in both of these statistics can be directly attributed to the increase in distribution of Naloxone by HPH team members each year within Hancock County.
- e. **People in Recovery as Peer Supports:** One of the main reasons for the success of these programs at HPH is due to people with lived experience of substance use as employees and advocates for harm reduction. The peers' lived experience lends itself to the program's participants in a way that someone without substance use cannot; and this has been invaluable in establishing a connection towards the participant making safer choices.



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- f. **Second Location Established:** HPH was able to secure funding from the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) to assist the agency in partnering with Equitas Health and LGBTQ+ Spectrum of Findlay to open a second site within Spectrum of Findlay to provide SafeWorks services. The location was selected based upon a 2021 Health Equities Report for Hancock County that utilized census data to identify the highest needs areas; and this was one of the two highest in Findlay. Additionally, this location serves a high-risk population (LGBTQ+) for drug overdose, along with being within several blocks of The City Mission; making these services more readily available to those who may have transportation issues to access HPH's location.
- g. **Publicizing Harm Reduction Programs and Services:** HPH held the necessary meetings with the stakeholders listed in Ohio Revised Code 3707.57 to convey the intent of the program, services to be provided, and to answer any questions by members of these groups. When HPH had the opportunity to expand its SafeWorks program to a second location, it communicated the proposed site to the City of Findlay as required by ORC 3707.57. Additionally, HPH has been featured in approximately 20 news articles to date (since May 2020) within The Courier newspaper, where the harm reduction services of SafeWorks were discussed.

II. Challenges

- a. **Stigma:** One of the main goals for the HPH harm reduction team is eliminating the stigma of substance use disorder within the community. People who use drugs (PWUD) need to know that they are valued by all who serve them, and to know that their substance use disorder should not define them nor affect their access to healthcare services. Unfortunately, the stigma still exists not only in Hancock County, but in most communities in the U.S.
- b. **Best Practices:** HPH is a member of a harm reduction network within Ohio that is comprised of public health agencies and non-profit health organizations working together to find solutions to helping PWUD make safer choices. While some methods may seem unconventional to those not in the harm reduction field, it is important for harm reduction practitioners to have the latitude to explore these possibilities to gather data towards establishing them as best practice.
- c. **Knowledge of Participants in Treatment:** HPH's SafeWorks program is anonymous by design (per the ORC) to encourage people to use the service without concern of disclosure. HPH's intake form does include questions about if a person is interested in treatment. If a participant asks about treatment options, the harm reduction team will offer those, but it is not asked if the person is ready for treatment. Due to the nature of the program being anonymous, HPH has no official way of knowing if these participants attend or complete treatment; so, it is difficult to surmise the actual number.



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III. Opportunities

- a. **Increase Participant Touchpoints:** HPH's SafeWorks program follows a needs-based model (best practice) rather than an exchange to allow participants to discuss their substance use with members of the harm reduction team and be provided enough supplies until they return to SafeWorks. Initially, participants were given the number of supplies requested without a specified limit; due to some participants stating that they distributed these supplies to other people who use drugs. HPH observed that certain participants would not return for an extended period of time or continued to receive supplies for others, when HPH wanted those individuals to actually come to the program.
- b. **Medical Presence at SafeWorks:** HPH initially had the presence of a public health nurse during SafeWorks at the agency where she would answer questions about safe injection sites, offer information about wound care, and address any general health questions of the participants. Unfortunately, this was discontinued due to a shift in section duties. However, the agency has a Certified Nurse Practitioner who has stated that she is planning to attend/be available for clients of SafeWorks at the HPH location; as she can actually make referrals for medical treatment as necessary.
- c. **Further Expansion of Naloxone Distribution:** HPH realized that it needed to have more of a presence within the townships and villages relative to the availability of Naloxone. The harm reduction team had previously placed several indoor Naloxoboxes but had the opportunity to purchase more with the State Opioid and Stimulant (SOS and formerly State Opioid Response) grant in 2023. HPH bought both indoor and all-weather Naloxoboxes with the intent to provide these boxes to communities, schools, churches, etc. to increase the availability of Naloxone if an overdose occurs.
- d. **Ongoing Partnership Education/Training:** The Hancock County Opioid and Addictions Task Force (HCOATF) was formed in 2010 by a group of concerned citizens to address the opioid crisis being experienced by individuals and families in Findlay and Hancock County. The Task Force has four (4) subcommittees (Community Awareness; Education; Legislative; and Medical) and is comprised of multi-disciplinary members who work to further harm reduction initiatives within their specialties. It was determined, through various local meetings, that an educational need exists to offer annual training opportunities to stakeholders (and constituents alike) on current harm reduction practices to provide accurate information and remove stigma of substance use.



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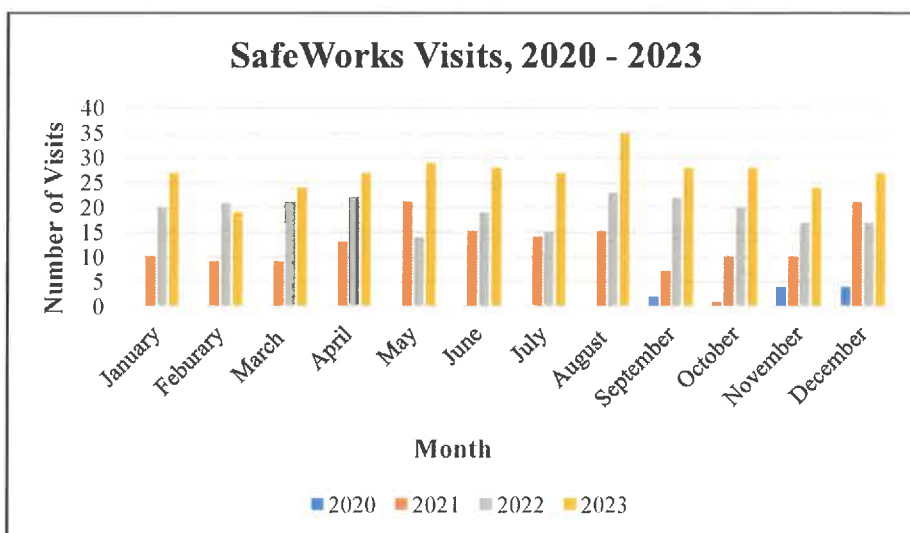
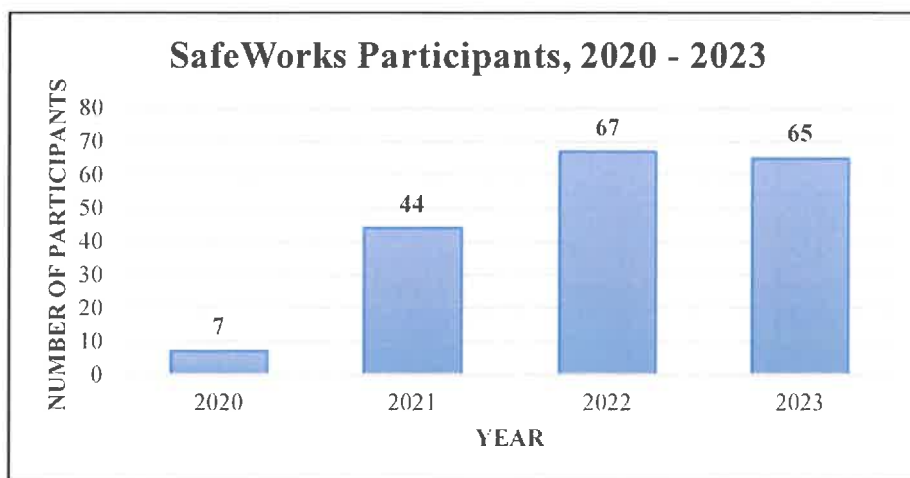
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IV. Discussion

- **Strengths / Accomplishments of the Harm Reduction Program**
Since its beginning, the harm reduction program at HPH has been about meeting people where they are and providing support to them in making safer choices with their substance use disorder. The program's success can be attributed to HPH employing people in recovery themselves (peer supports), who can make connections with participants on a level that others cannot, while also being proponents of safer use practices to minimize communicable disease propagation in the community. The relatability of the peer supports, and the trust they have established among the participants, is what has allowed the program to thrive and grow (*see the following graphics exhibiting the number of unique participants and non-unique visits each year*).





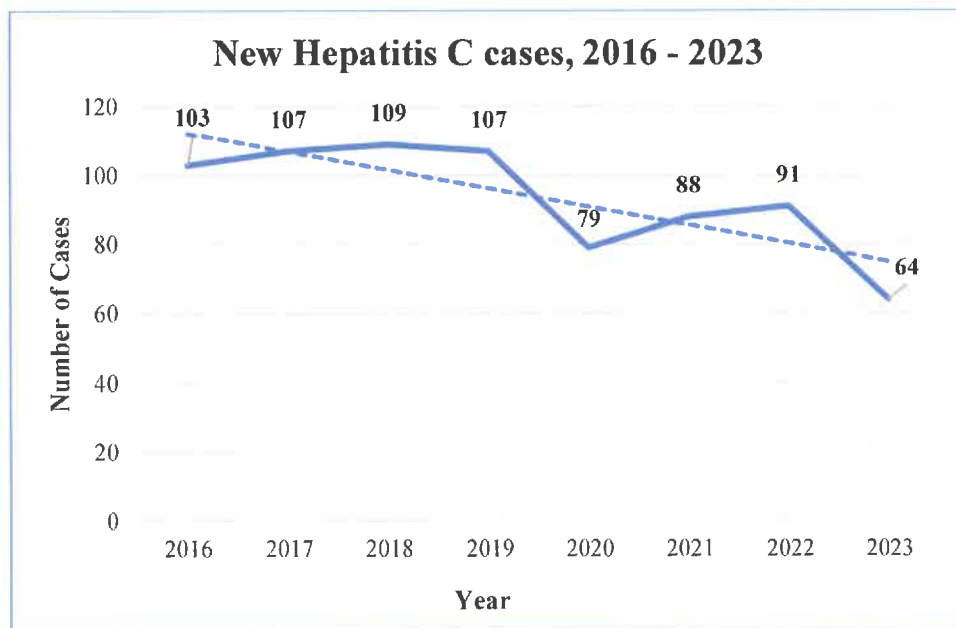
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The basis of the SafeWorks program, per the ORC, is to reduce the spread of communicable diseases. Historically, the number of new Hepatitis C cases in Findlay and Hancock County has been above 100 cases annually. However, beginning in 2020 (when the program started) this number was below 100 annual cases - remaining this way each year and finishing 2023 with only 64 new cases; as the graph below illustrates.



Obviously, it could be stated that this decrease in new cases was due to the COVID pandemic, but the program experienced steady increases in new participants each year from 2020-2023 (coupled with increased education outreach from the peer supports) that we believe played a significant role in reducing these numbers. HPH is hopeful to have more of an impact in decreasing the new Hepatitis C rates since adding the second SafeWorks location at LGBTQ+ Spectrum of Findlay in 2023; as identified as a high-needs area via census tract data per the 2021 Hancock County Health Equities Report.



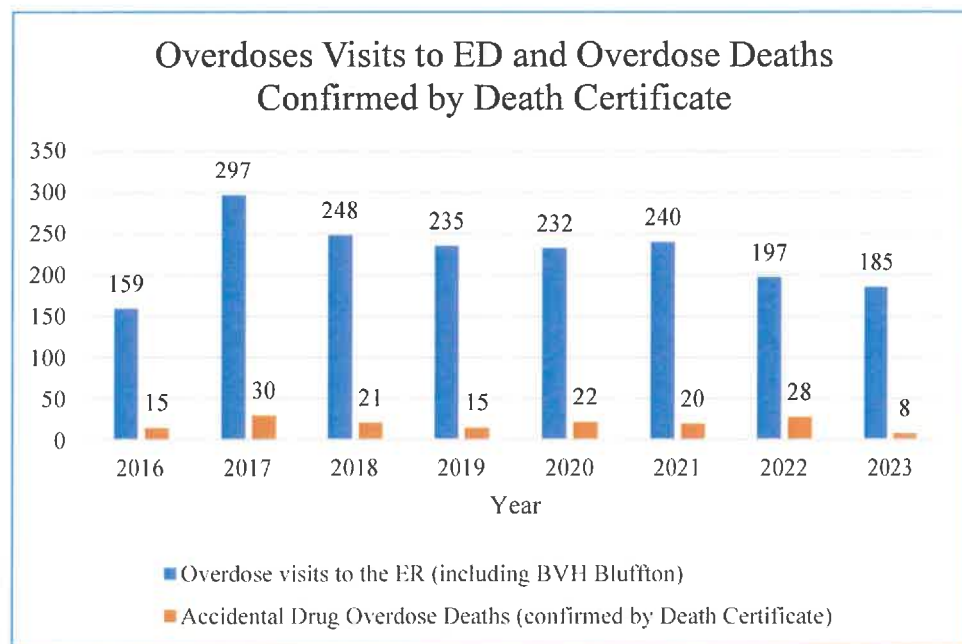
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Since 2018, Hancock County has experienced a steady decline in the number of visits to the ED for overdoses as well as fatal overdoses. HPH has continued to grow its harm reduction program from one (1) to three (3) employees with the sole purpose of empowering and educating community members on how to prevent fatal overdoses through the distribution of Naloxone along with resource referral. *The following graphic demonstrates that in 2018 (a year after hiring a full-time Harm Reduction Coordinator), the overdose visits and overdose deaths decreased, in part, to this position's outreach efforts (and then with the eventual hiring of two (2) full-time Peer Support Specialists and an Overdose Fatality Review Coordinator) to increase the number of Naloxone kits given to individuals.*



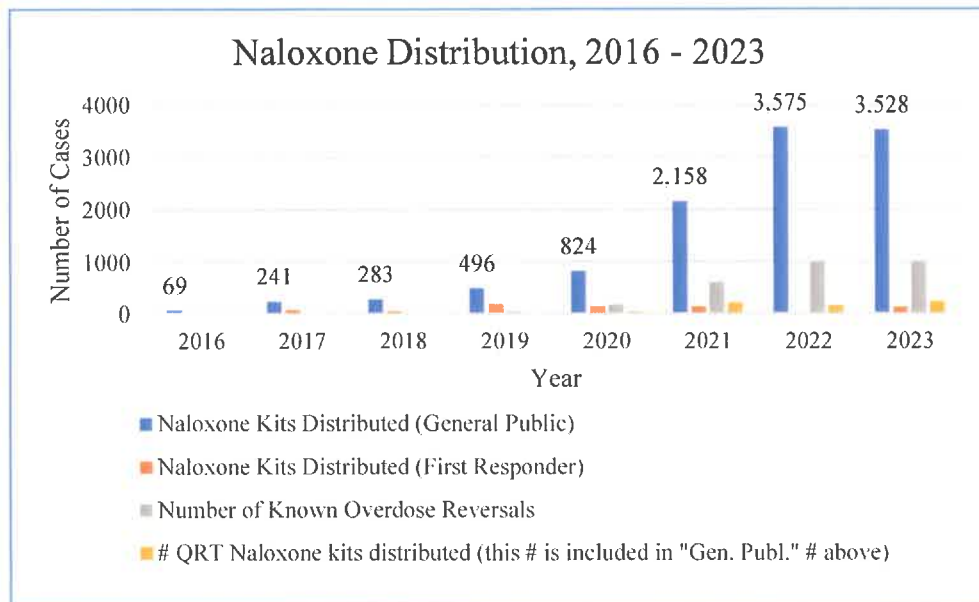
HPH has also been the recipient of State Opioid and Stimulant (SOS) funding from the State of Ohio (via the local ADAMHS), whereby HPH was able to purchase indoor and outdoor Naloxboxes. The units can be placed in buildings and common outdoor areas of communities to allow increased accessibility to the life-saving Naloxone and decrease the likelihood of a fatal overdose. The harm reduction team delivers the units and maintains the supply of Naloxone within these cabinets on a regular basis. HPH has provided 43 indoor and outdoor Naloxboxes throughout the county since August 2022.



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Additionally, the above graphic highlights that the number of **known** overdose reversals continued to increase (this number is most likely higher) with the provision of Naloxone. HPH began tracking this statistic in 2020 with the advent of the SafeWorks program as part of the participant intake process. Participants were asked if they had recently used Naloxone on someone who was overdosing, witnessed a reversal, or personally had been revived with Naloxone. Consequently, 42% of all Naloxone kits distributed in 2023 were through SafeWorks.

HPH has also been transparent when publicizing its harm reduction program and the services being offered. It is true that the agency does not advertise SafeWorks using mainstream media or billboards to prevent apprehension by potential program participants. However, when numerous articles have been written and published in the local newspaper since 2020, the content has always been open and honest about what is being accomplished through SafeWorks to benefit the Hancock County community. Incidentally, no negative response from the public has been received at HPH since the program's inception.



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○ Challenges

The primary barrier facing harm reduction today within the county (and country) is the ongoing stigma of people who use drugs (PWUD). HPH's objective is to serve them as people first and ask them about their needs. The SafeWorks program is typically providing services to those individuals who are deep in their substance use disorder, and they need support in making safer choices. HPH is committed to collaborating with other agencies in Findlay and Hancock to remove the stigma so that these citizens can work towards successfully contributing to their communities.

Another challenge that the harm reduction program has encountered is the idea of what "best practice" is relative to SafeWorks operations. There are 25 harm reduction programs in Ohio (similar to SafeWorks) where many utilize the same methodology as best practice based on data and participants' input. However, it is difficult to initiate a possible best practice if HPH does not have the opportunity to implement it long enough to evaluate success or failure. The harm reduction program wants to remain fluid and explore the applicability of possible services if they have the potential to protect the health of the participants and community, while remaining within the scope of the law.

○ Opportunities

SafeWorks follows a "needs-based" model of allowing program participants to receive the amount of supplies they will use until the next time they return to the service. The participants would also request additional supplies for others they knew who were not ready to come to SafeWorks. Though our harm reduction team appreciates the secondary distribution of supplies, the main goal is to have the individuals come to the location so that a human connection can be made, and our team can have a sense of the person's needs. SafeWorks has started to limit some supplies in an effort to have more participants attend in person, which will allow for an increased likelihood of supporting these people in their journey.

Another opportunity that our program will employ to make an impact on the lives of the participants is having the presence of a certified nurse practitioner at SafeWorks. HPH employs a CNP as our Director of Nursing/Mobile Health Clinic, and she has expressed her interest in the initiative. It is our belief that this will allow participants to ask general health questions, along with checks of any possible wounds and referral for treatment, since many of these people have not been to a healthcare provider for a period of time due to fear of stigma by the healthcare system.



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HPH is also pursuing the increased distribution of Naloxone throughout the county. It is the harm reduction team's mission to have at least one (1) Naloxbox cabinet in each village, township, and city in Hancock County to allow access to this life-saving measure.

HPH has considered the possibility of having vending machines with Naloxone available free to the public and communicated with other northwest Ohio counties to discuss how this is accomplished. HPH has also spoken with two (2) entities within the highest-need census tracts of Findlay to gauge their interest in hosting these vending machines, and HPH has received a commitment of acceptance by each.

One area where our county could benefit would be in ongoing harm reduction training/education for community stakeholders. Early in the opioid crisis response, numerous trainings were held to inform partner agencies of the issues surrounding addiction and what resources were available to assist in the response. However, many of the individuals who received the training at that time are not part of the harm reduction discussion today due to any number of employment reasons (i.e., attrition, retirement, new role, etc.) The harm reduction effort in Hancock County must maintain a certain level of continuity and consistency in order to succeed; and one way is by offering training on best practices that can be applied and scaled to all communities, including how to remove stigma of substance use.

V. Conclusion

The harm reduction and SafeWorks program at HPH has made a significant impact on the lives of people living with a substance use disorder, along with the entire community, as demonstrated by the decrease in fatal overdose deaths and new Hepatitis C cases. Public Health, by definition and by law, is responsible for the health of the entire population in Hancock County and Findlay; including those who are considered marginalized by society. People with substance use disorders need the same opportunities to survive and thrive like every other person in our communities, and this program is simply another way to help. The focus of harm reduction is to decrease the likelihood of fatal overdoses in our constituents by providing safer options (to those people who have a substance use disorder) in an effort to protect them and the community from bloodborne diseases, while working to make referrals for further assistance when and if they are ready. It is the hope of the harm reduction team that together, our community and partner agencies can collectively rally to support the strategies and initiatives developed to support our fellow citizens in their time of need.