

Board of Health Report: February 2023

Substance Abuse and Prevention, Lowell Health Department

Massachusetts Collaborative for Action, Leadership, and Learning 3 (MassCALL3)

Devin Gilmore, Substance Use Prevention Grant Coordinator

Grant Updates

Devin submitted the first deliverable of the Lowell MassCALL3 Strategic Plan (SPP) on November 30th. The SPP is a detailed plan of action to address particular variables found to increase risk for youth substance misuse in Lowell. The first deliverable outlined the grant's Assessment and Capacity Building phases, while the second deliverable will outline the Strategic Planning phase.

Health Education

- Devin dropped off educational materials on vaping and other substances of first use to Butler Middle School on January 12th to support their efforts to initiate a vape-free school community. Devin has been collaborating with Butler's health teacher to plan a school-wide initiative to promote anti-vaping norms.
- Devin visited Sullivan Middle School's seventh graders to present workshops on vaping and substance use disorders on January 17th and 18th.
- Devin hosted the Health Education Taskforce virtually on January 19th. The Health Education Taskforce is a space where health educators from local schools and youth-serving organizations come together to share resources and strengthen existing curricula.
- Devin hosted a table to engage local parents in conversations about substance misuse prevention in early childhood at the Lowell Public Schools' Preschool Registration on January 24th.
- Devin visited the Career Academy on January 27th to present a seminar to students on vaping.

Professional Development

- Devin attended the virtual Breathe for Change Yoga and Mindfulness Teacher Training on January 7th and 8th. She and nine other youth-serving professionals in Lowell will complete 200 hours of training from October 2022 – March 2023.
- On January 17th and 20th, Devin attended the virtual trainings "Substance Use Prevention Programming for Youth" and "Youth Cannabis Prevention: Alternatives to Suspension and Restorative Practices."
- Devin attended the 9th Annual BSAS Statewide Substance Use Prevention Conference on January 24th.

Racial Equity

Devin is offering a portion of this year's grant funding to be used to sponsor up to ten local bilingual professionals or community members in Lowell Community Health Center's Bridging the Gap Professional Medical Interpreter Training, scheduled to take place in February.

Syringe Collection Program
Andres Gonzalez, Syringe Collection Program Coordinator

City Department and Community Partner Engagement:

- CXS Rail
- National Park Service
- Lowell Litter Krew
- Clean River Project
- Canal Cleaner
- MVRTA
- Heritage State Park
- Lowell Housing Authority
- Lowell Public Schools
- Lowell City Council
- Lowell Public Works
- Salvation Army
- Life Connection Center
- Mass Hire Youth Program
- UMass Lowell
- Trinity E.M.S.
- Middlesex County Superior Court
 - Mass DOT
 - Office of the City Manager
 - Lowell CO-OP
 - Lowell Street Department
 - Lowell Police Department
 - Lowell Parks Department

Areas Proactively Swept for Discarded Syringes:

- Veteran's Way
- Gorham Street
- Dutton Street Bridge
- Riverfront Park
- Le Lachur Park
- Lowell Locks
- Eastern Canal Park
- Hunts Falls Bridge
- George Street
- Favor Street
- Rogers Street Bridge
- South Common Park
- North Common Park
- Thorndike Overpass
- Eastern Canal Park
- Concord River
- Point Park
- Bridge Street Park
- River Bike Path
- Lincoln Street
- Union Street

Syringe Collection Activity 2022

Total Number of...	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Discarded pick-up requests	11												11
Incoming calls for pick-up requests	15												15
Syringes picked-up while responding to all discarded pick-up requests	453												4530
Syringes picked up during Community Clean-up Events	0												0
Syringes proactively picked-up while in the community	833												833
Hours proactively picking-up discarded syringes	50												50

Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program (CO-OP) – **Overview**
Maricia Verma, Lowell CO-OP Supervisor
Lowell CO-OP Data

--	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total Encounters	235	136	192	136	145	152	176	139	180	208	204	216	2119
Unique Encounters	124	92	117	87	84	101	108	105	136	138	146	142	1380
Initial Interaction	49	7	17	18	16	29	26	37	68	52	55	48	448
OD Follow-Up	20	7	17	7	2	4	7	17	34	36	47	46	244
Section 35	1	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	11
Clinical Clients	94	67	85	67	40	82	75	65	77	76	76	76	880
Disseminate Narcan	106	66	8	0	10	1	10	2	88	24	24	19	402
SUD Treatment	29	89	22	21	37	30	29	19	22	24	21	9	352
Medical Treatment	11	15	18	33	10	8	22	18	9	3	15	23	185
Other Services	22	17	1	0	0	17	0	3	0	0	0	0	60
Misc. Outreach	241	152	224	44	25	0	21	0	155	35	35	10	898

2022 Calendar Summary

In June 2022 Maricia and Rhiannon attended four full days of virtual training on Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training (SAPST) at the New England Summer School of Addiction and Prevention Studies. And two full 24th 2 full days of virtual training “Romancing the Brain: Conflict Resolution for Recovery (CRR)” a skill-based and focused on the brain, works in conflict and strategies to affect the quality of recovery in relationships. Maricia and Rhiannon will be adapting the CRR to provide trainings in the community. In July, Maricia and Gianna were informed that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) awarded the City of Lowell, a First Responders Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Support Services Act Grant. The grant named the Lowell Comprehensive Addiction Recovery and Support Initiative (CARSI), is for 1.9 million dollars over the course of four years. The CARSI will support harm reduction, naloxone distribution, and other efforts of the Lowell CO-OP, Trinity EMS a division of PrideStar, Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery, as well as other community providers.

Maricia, Gianna, and Robin Toof, co-director Center for Community Research and Engagement (CCRE), and her team from University of Massachusetts Lowell, collaborated on the Disparity Impact Statement (DIS) for the CARSI. The DIS is a condition of award for SAMHSA grants it is a first step toward identifying whether a grantee is working with underserved groups and the extent to which that grantee will address health disparities. The DIS helps grantees identify, contextualize, address disparities, and develop and implement a quality improvement plan that reduces disparities and addresses the identified gap(s).

Additional

This month Maricia has refined data collection processes for the Lowell CO-OP’s follow-up on reported overdoses (OD Follow-Up), and helping Lowell House’s Outreach team establish data collection for the CARSI grant.

Maricia continues to supervise the day to day operation of the Lowell CO-OP, work with community partners, and provide coordination and guidance for more complex clinical clients.

Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program (CO-OP) – **Youth Services**
Rhiannon Archambault, Youth Outreach Specialist

Youth Services Data

--	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Youth Services Sessions	22	19	50	41	56	66	50	33	38	73	37	18	503
Engaged Youth Services Clients	7	5	11	9	13	15	13	9	16	14	15	6	133
SUD Treatment and Recovery Coordination	13	3	6	4	12	14	8	9	8	14	6	2	99
Healthcare Coordination	5	12	4	11	34	56	21	21	13	60	26	8	271
Housing Coordination	3	6	17	15	25	30	21	18	19	41	18	6	219

2022 Youth Outreach Specialist (YOS) Summary

For youth and young adults (24 and under), homelessness and housing insecurity are a major risk factor for future substance use. The earlier the age of first use, the greater the likelihood of becoming addicted in adulthood. Rhiannon took on the YOS role in February and sought to make connections with clients, community providers, and other youth and outreach-focused services. Lack of safe and secure housing was a trend among many new and existing YOS clients. Based on individual self-reporting of their own housing status less than 20% of YOS clients are safely housed in a stable location by the end of 2022. The Lowell CO-OP spoke to multiple 8th grade classes among Lowell Public Schools throughout the spring. These classes were researching information for Generation Citizen, an organization whose mission is to “transform civics education so that young people are equipped and inspired to exercise their civic power”. After the departure of CO-OP EMT Evan Lucey in May, Rhiannon took on in assisting Gianna Sandelli with the facilitation of Narcan trainings throughout Greater Lowell. Rhiannon and Gianna trained more than 250 individuals between September and December. Part of Rhiannon’s mission as the YOS is to educate clients and other community members and organizations on not only the harms of substance misuse, but to also harm reduction practices, and substance use as a whole.

Addressing Barriers to Treatment, Housing, and Other Services

Rhiannon will sometimes assist adult clients outside of the YOS scope as needed. Due to such versatility of ages, Rhiannon has worked to identify many barriers that can affect those of any age experiencing homelessness, addiction, psychiatric/behavioral health diagnoses, and acute/chronic medical conditions. Some of the most common barriers clients have reported that impact their abilities to immediately access services are: obtaining vital documentation (i.e. photo ID, birth certificate/proof of birth, etc.), affordable housing and shelter, acquiring transportation to appointments, extremely long wait-lists for new services, bed availability for substance use and/or psychiatric treatment, and for some a general lack of education for how to individually sustain and navigate finances and services.

Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program (CO-OP) – **Clinical Services**
Joseph Aniello, Clinical Recovery Specialist

*Please note that Clinical Staff on the Lowell CO-OP are Joseph Aniello, Maricia Verma (CO-OP Supervisor), and Gianna Sandelli (Director of Outreach, Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery).

Lowell CO-OP Clinical Data: 2021 and 2022 Comparison

--	December 2021	December 2022	Total 2021	Total 2022
Clinical Sessions	137	94	1,671	1,395
Clinical Clients	77	66	775	866
Initial Interaction	13	19	178	229
Medical Treatment	15	10	280	271
Transportation	11	9	150	268
Housing	57	30	690	557
Financial	83	67	809	870
DCF	3	2	43	31
Other	34	15	408	279

Brief Client Case Example

This section will be used to share success stories of clients working with Lowell CO-OP’s clinical staff. Success stories help to frame the work of the Lowell CO-OP, and adds context to the various needs and levels of support that Lowell CO-OP clients face as they work towards recovery

Joseph encountered Cambodian female at campsite early in November of 2022. Joseph was able to build rapport with client over last few weeks. Joseph assisted client with clothing from donation room. Joseph assisted client establish services from Department of Transitional Assistance. Joseph was able to start documentation services for client by setting appointment with Chea Law group to secure green card. Client is currently in contemplation stage of recovery.

Additional

Joseph began collaborating with BHCP programs from Lowell House and Lowell Community Health Center and Lowell Addiction Treatment and Recovery to find affordable housing for elderly clients suffering from housing insecurity. Joseph started collaborating with Bridge club of Greater Lowell to secure employment for mutual clients.