

Comprehensive Harm Reduction in Virginia

Health and Human Resources Subpanel Meeting
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What is Harm Reduction?

- Harm Reduction refers to activities that reduce the negative consequences of an activity or behavior
 - Seat belts, sunscreen, ear plugs, vaccines, bike helmets, statins
- Comprehensive Harm Reduction (CHR) is a set of public health services designed to reduce the negative impact of drug use. CHR prevents HIV, hepatitis C, endocarditis, soft tissue infections, overdose and death. It is intended for those who are unable to, or not ready to stop using drugs. The goal is to keep people alive and help them work towards recovery.

Virginia's Comprehensive Harm Reduction Program

- Virginia's law passed in 2017 was amended in 2020 to expand eligibility, remove barriers for authorization and provide paraphernalia protections for individuals receiving services and supplies from a CHR site.
- Authorized CHR Sites must include:
 - Syringe exchange, counseling and referrals to SUD treatment/mental health services, Naloxone distribution, HIV and Hepatitis testing and linkage to care, referral to an array of medical, supportive and social services, insurance enrollment, condom distribution

Localities with CHR Services

Southwest

Lenowisco Health District- Scott Co, Wise Co

Mt. Rogers Health District- Smyth Co

Council of Community Services- Roanoke

Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition- Roanoke

Northwest

Strength in Peers- Harrisonburg, Page Co, Rockingham Co, Shenandoah Co

AIDS Response Effort- Winchester, Berryville

Localities with CHR Services

Northern Virginia

Chris Atwood Foundation- **Fairfax, Prince William Co** (*also authorized for Arlington, Loudon, Alexandria, Falls Church, Manassas Park, and Manassas*)

Central Virginia

Health Brigade- **Richmond**

Eastern Virginia

Minority AIDS Support Services- **Newport News, Norfolk, Virginia Beach**
Hampton Veterans Medical Center - **(pending authorization)**

CHR Sites in Development

Lynchburg

Portsmouth

Hampton,
Newport News

Danville

Franklin Co,
Martinsville

Petersburg

Key Outcomes

July 1-2018 - August 31, 2023

All Clients Enrolled- 9,375

Percentage of Clients Receiving Harm Reduction Counseling- 96.4%

Overdose Reversals Reported by Clients- 4,733

Sterile Syringes Distributed- 2,957,227

CHR Cumulative Data July 1, 2018-August 31, 2023

Service	Referrals	Linkages
Mental Health /SUD Treatment	4,661	927
HIV Testing	2,497	878
HCV Testing	2,214	575
Family Planning	1,658	1,371

Next Steps

- Engage localities most impacted by the opioid crisis to dispel myths about CHR, assess community readiness and provide technical assistance for site development
- Work with law enforcement and criminal justice (prosecutors, judges) to ensure understanding of the program and Virginia's laws
- Address growing impact of xylazine
- Secure additional funding to support program expansion

For More Information

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