

City of Lowell

The Impact of Harm Reduction on Community and Environmental Health



Lowell Health
Department

Prevent • Promote • Protect

The Impact of Harm Reduction on Community and Environmental Health

- ∞ Andres Gonzalez, Syringe Collection Program Coordinator
- ∞ Maricia Verma, LMHC, Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program Supervisor



What is Public Health?

☞ “the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society” (Acheson, 1988; WHO).

Agenda

- ∞ The Syringe Collection Program
- ∞ The Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program
- ∞ How does Substance Use prevention programming incorporate other areas of public health
- ∞ Harm reduction's impact on environmental health

City of Lowell

Syringe Collection Program

Lowell Health Department

107 Merrimack Street 4th Floor

Lowell, MA 01852



Lowell Health
Department

Prevent • Promote • Protect

Syringe Collection Program

- ☞ Program Creation
- ☞ Training
- ☞ Engineering Control
- ☞ Outreach material
- ☞ Logistics



The Syringe Collection Program



If you see a Syringe/Sharp in public, please **do not** attempt to pick it up. Please call the Lowell Health Department at **(978) 674-1049** to arrange for collection & disposal.

Lowell Health Department Syringe Collection Program Hours:

Monday: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
Tuesday: 8:00 am - 7:00 pm
Wednesday: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
Thursday: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
Friday: 8:00 am - 12:00 pm



To report discarded needles after program hours, please call the Lowell Police Department non-emergency line at (978) 937-3200.
Do not call Trinity EMS.

R 7/20

Year One



Syringe Collection Program

Year One Summary

April 16th, 2019 - April 15th, 2020

Syringes Removed from the Community

Pick-up Requests: 2,904
Proactive Clean-up: 10,784
Community Clean-up Events: 443

Total **INDIVIDUAL** Syringes Removed from the Community by the Syringe Collection Program Coordinator:

14,131

Program Fast Facts

Incoming Pick-up Requests: 404
Hours Spent on Proactive Cleanups: 451
Community Clean-up Events Attended: 12
Community Partners Engaged: 109

Sharps Disposal Kiosk

611 pounds of sharps were disposed through the Lowell Health Department's sharps disposal kiosk.

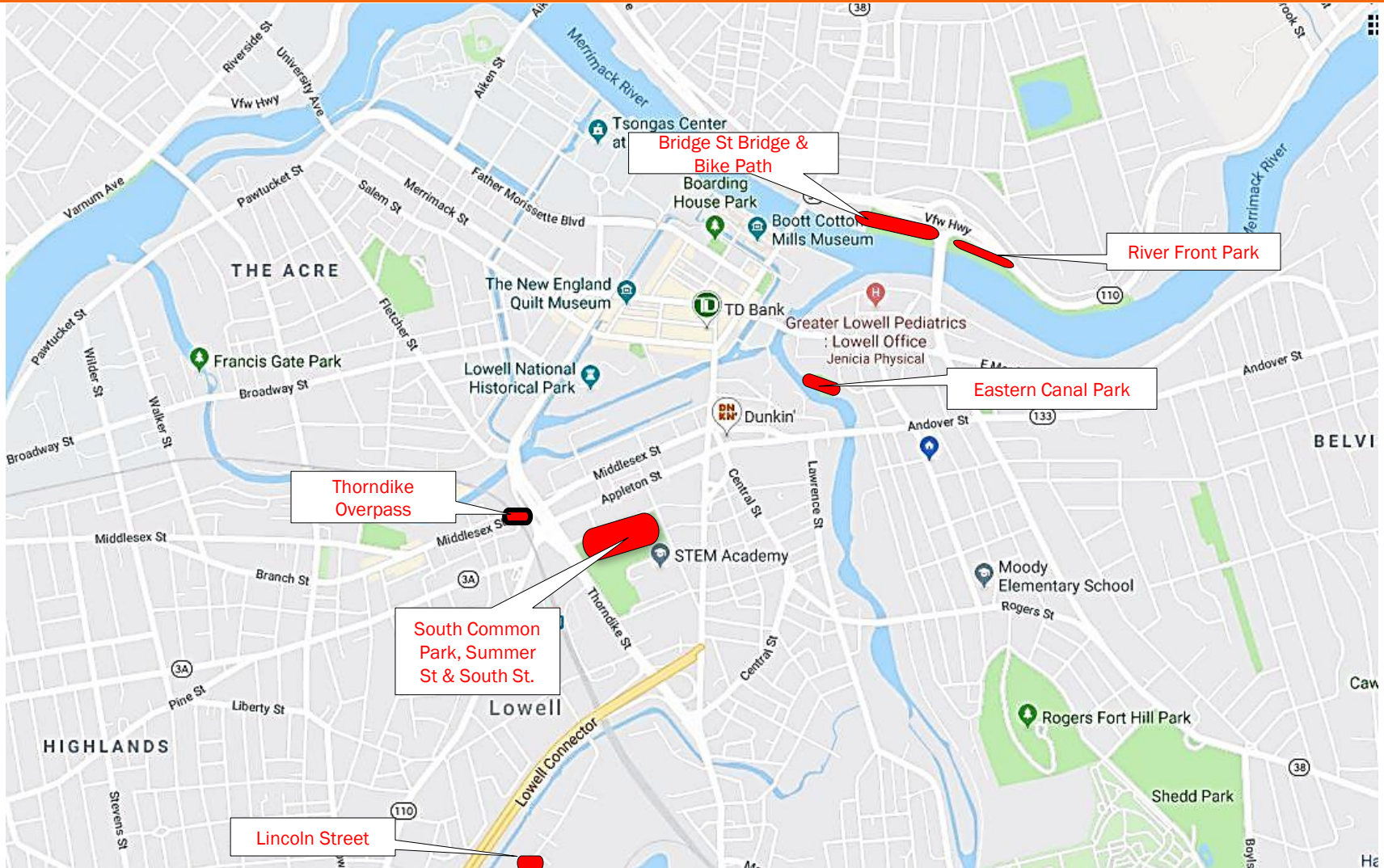
Total **POUNDS** of Syringes Disposed of by Community Members:

1,372

Unwanted Medication & Sharps Disposal Days

761 pounds of unwanted sharps were disposed of at Disposal Day events held in June 2019, Sept. 2019, Dec. 2019, and Mar. 2020.

Top Hot Spots



Partnerships & Community Involvement

Connecting with City of Lowell Departments and Programs

- ☞ City Manager's Office
- ☞ Department of Development Services
- ☞ Department of Planning & Development
- ☞ Department of Public Works
- ☞ Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program (CO-OP)
- ☞ Parks Department
- ☞ Police Department
- ☞ MassDot (State)

Partnerships & Community Involvement

Supporting Initiatives within the City

- ∞ LPS Field days
- ∞ The Reopening of Jack Kerouac Park
- ∞ Riverwalk Improvement Initiative
- ∞ Neighborhood Enforcement Walks
- ∞ Summer Movie Night
- ∞ Canal Clean-up Events
- ∞ Riverwalk Clean-up Events



Partnerships & Community Involvement

Engaging with the Community

- ☞ Lowell Public Schools
 - ☞ Private Schools within Lowell
 - ☞ Community Agencies
 - ☞ Neighborhood Associations
 - ☞ Churches
 - ☞ Youth Serving Agencies
 - ☞ Local Businesses
 - ☞ Syringe Services Programs
-
- ☞ Peace in the Park
 - ☞ Earth Day
 - ☞ Lowell Community Blood Drive
 - ☞ Lowell Folk Festival
 - ☞ National Night Out



Campaigns

ATTENTION



Please do not throw needles into the trash can or recycling containers.

PLEASE CALL 978-674-1049 TO HAVE NEEDLES REMOVED.

On nights and weekends, please call the non-emergency police phone line at 978-937-3200.

Por favor no tire agujas en la basura o reciclaje de contenedores.

POR FAVOR LLAME 978-674-1049 PARA QUE LE QUITEN AGUJAS.

Si nos contacta fuera del horario de atención, llame al número de teléfono de la policía que no sea de emergencia al 978-937-3200.



Syringe Collection Program

Local Business Winter Weather Announcement

To all Lowell Business Owners and Staff,
Due to the cold weather, we ask that you pay close attention for to the public bathrooms at your establishment as there could be syringe(s) left behind.

What To Look For:

- Unusually long duration of bathroom use
- Multiple patrons entering bathroom together
- Patrons entering bathroom with bags
- Patrons urgently needing to use bathroom

If you suspect that there are syringes in your bathroom and would like to request an inspection, please call the Syringe Collection Program at the City of Lowell Health Department.



Restroom

Business That Should Be Aware:

- Hotels
- Coffee Shops
- Department Stores
- Transportation Terminals
- Libraries
- Churches
- Any Public Bathroom

Where You Might Find Syringes:

- Behind the Toilet
- Trash Barrels
- Rolled-up Bathroom Tissue
- Inside of the Toilet Tank

If you see a syringe in a public bathroom, **please do not attempt to pick it up.** Please call the Lowell Health Department at (978) 674-1049 to arrange for collection and disposal.

To report discarded needles after program hours, please call the Lowell Police Department non-emergency line at (978) 937-3200. **Do not call Trinity EMS.**



8.10.2020



Syringe Collection Program

Call the Lowell Health Department for any discarded needles you might find at your parks, fields, and schools.

If you see a discarded needle please do not pick it up.

Please call (978) 674-1049 to have syringes removed.

On nights and weekends, please call the non-emergency police phone line at 978-937-3200.



Year Two



Lowell Health
Department
Prevent · Promote · Protect

Syringe Collection Program 2020 Calendar Year Summary

Syringes Removed from the Community

Pick-up Requests: 2,539
Proactive Clean-up: 13,402
Community Clean-up Events: 0*

**Please note that the COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted the ability to engage in community clean-up events.*

Total **INDIVIDUAL**
Syringes Removed from
the Community by
the Syringe Collection
Program Coordinator:

15,941

Program Fast Facts

Incoming Pick-up Requests: 417
Hours Spent on Proactive Cleanups: 678
Community Clean-up Events Attended: 0*
Community Partners Engaged: 89

**Please note that the COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted the ability to host and engage in community clean-up events.*

Sharps Disposal Kiosk

513 pounds of sharps were disposed through the Lowell Health Department's sharps disposal kiosk.

Total **POUNDS** of
Syringes Disposed of by
Community Members:

872

Unwanted Medication & Sharps Disposal Days

359 pounds of unwanted sharps were disposed of at the Disposal Day* event held in March.

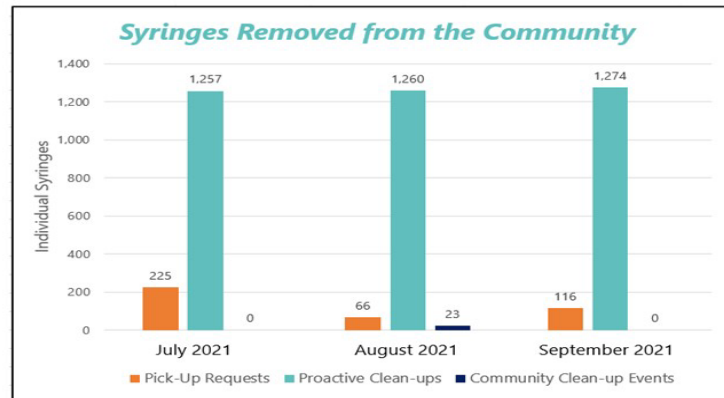
**Please note that only one event was held due to the impacts of COVID-19.*

Last Quarter

Syringe Collection Program Quarterly Report July - Sept. 2021



The Syringe Collection Program (SCP) at the Lowell Health Department was established in 2019 as a means to educate the community on sharps safety and to respond to discarded syringe pick-up requests within Lowell. The SCP Coordinator actively builds relationships with community organizations to identify locations of frequent needle discard, proactively removes discarded needles in public spaces, coordinates educational activities surrounding safe needle storage and disposal, and supports community clean-up efforts. This quarterly report provides information on the program's progress.



Syringe "Hotspots"

The SCP Coordinator works to identify areas across Lowell that have a high concentration of discarded syringes. These sites are proactively checked for syringes on a weekly basis. In this quarter, the most popular spots were concentrated near **Veteran's Way** and **South Common Park**.

Fast Facts July - Sept. 2021

4,251

total syringes collected

99

incoming discarded syringe pick-up requests

231

hours spent on proactive cleanups

21

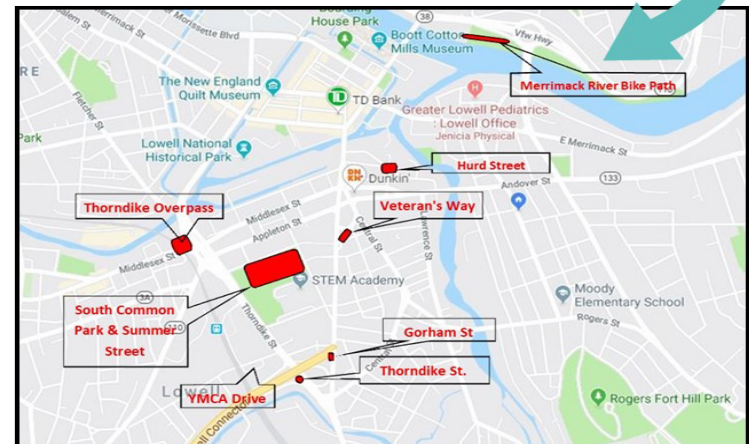
different community partners engaged

4

new syringe "hotspots" identified

1

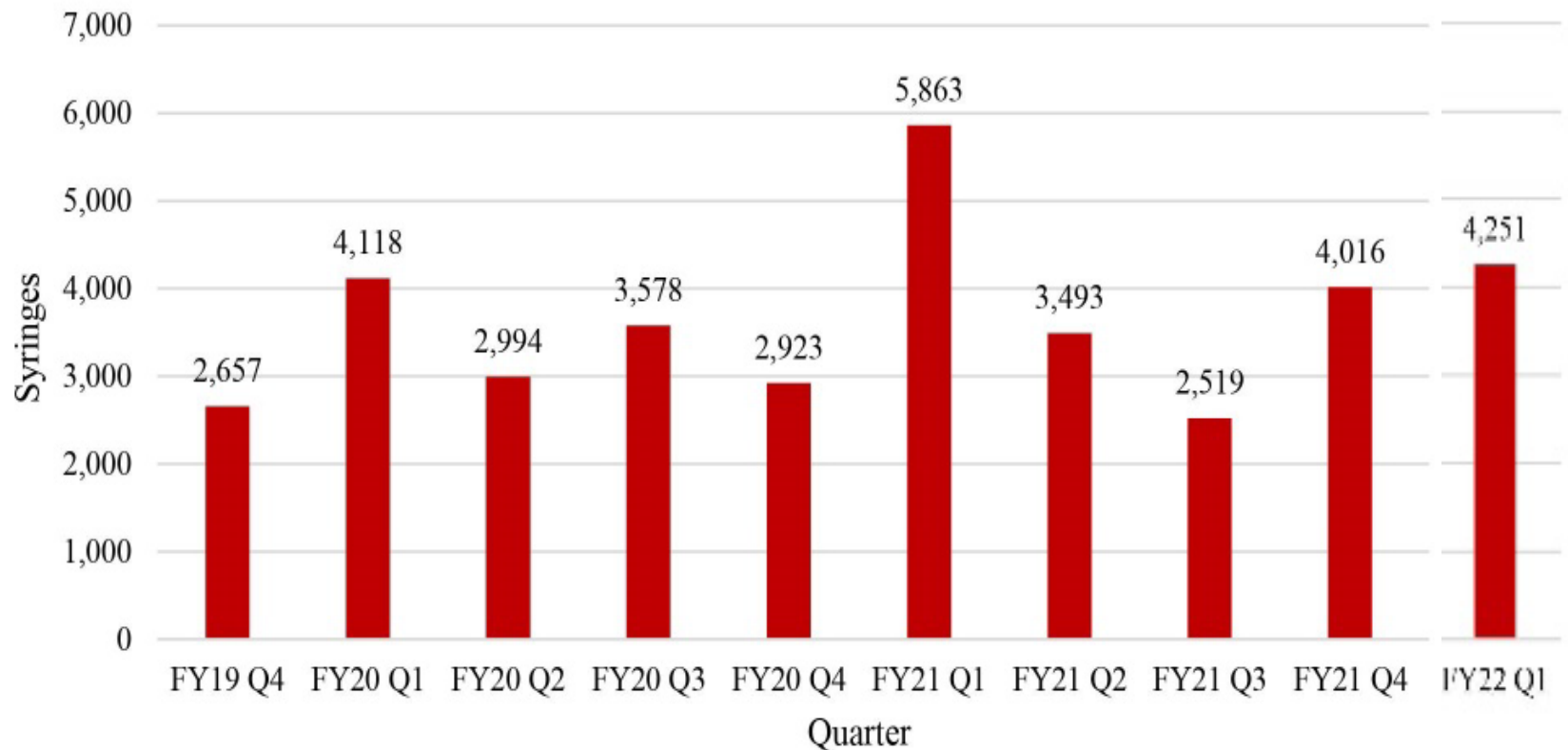
community clean-up events attended



Have questions? Contact Andres Gonzalez, SCP Coordinator at 978-674-1049 or via email at agonzalez@lowellma.gov.

Comparing Quarterly Data

Syringe Collection Program, Lowell Health Department
Total Syringes Collected Quarterly



2021

	Individual Sharps Collected during Pick-up Requests	Requests by Calls	Requests by Email	Individual Sharps Collected during Strategic Hotspot Pick-ups
2021				
January	60	18	0	686
February	60	11	1	141
March	215	48	2	1357
April	134	28	4	1008
May	61	27	2	1215
June	52	19	0	1603
July	255	36	3	1257
August	66	23	2	1260
September	116	31	4	1274
October	283	18	0	502
November				
December				
Totals 2021	1,302.0	259.0	18.0	10,303.0

Kiosk: 430 lbs. UMSDD: 308 lbs. Total 11,605



Andres Gonzalez

Syringe Collection Program Coordinator

Substance Abuse & Prevention Division

Lowell Health Department



Lowell Health
Department

Prevent • Promote • Protect

Phone: 978-674-1049

Fax: 978-970-4011

City of Lowell

Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program (Lowell CO-OP)

291 Summer St, Lowell, MA 01852



Lowell Health
Department

Prevent • Promote • Protect

Lowell CO-OP Mission Statement

- ∞ The mission of the Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program (The Lowell CO-OP) is to reduce the number of fatal and non-fatal overdoses in the city of Lowell while increasing the number of overdose survivors who access treatment, behavioral, medical, and other necessary services. The Lowell CO-OP staff work with survivors and their loved ones, as well as those in recovery, to meet immediate and long-term needs of individuals.



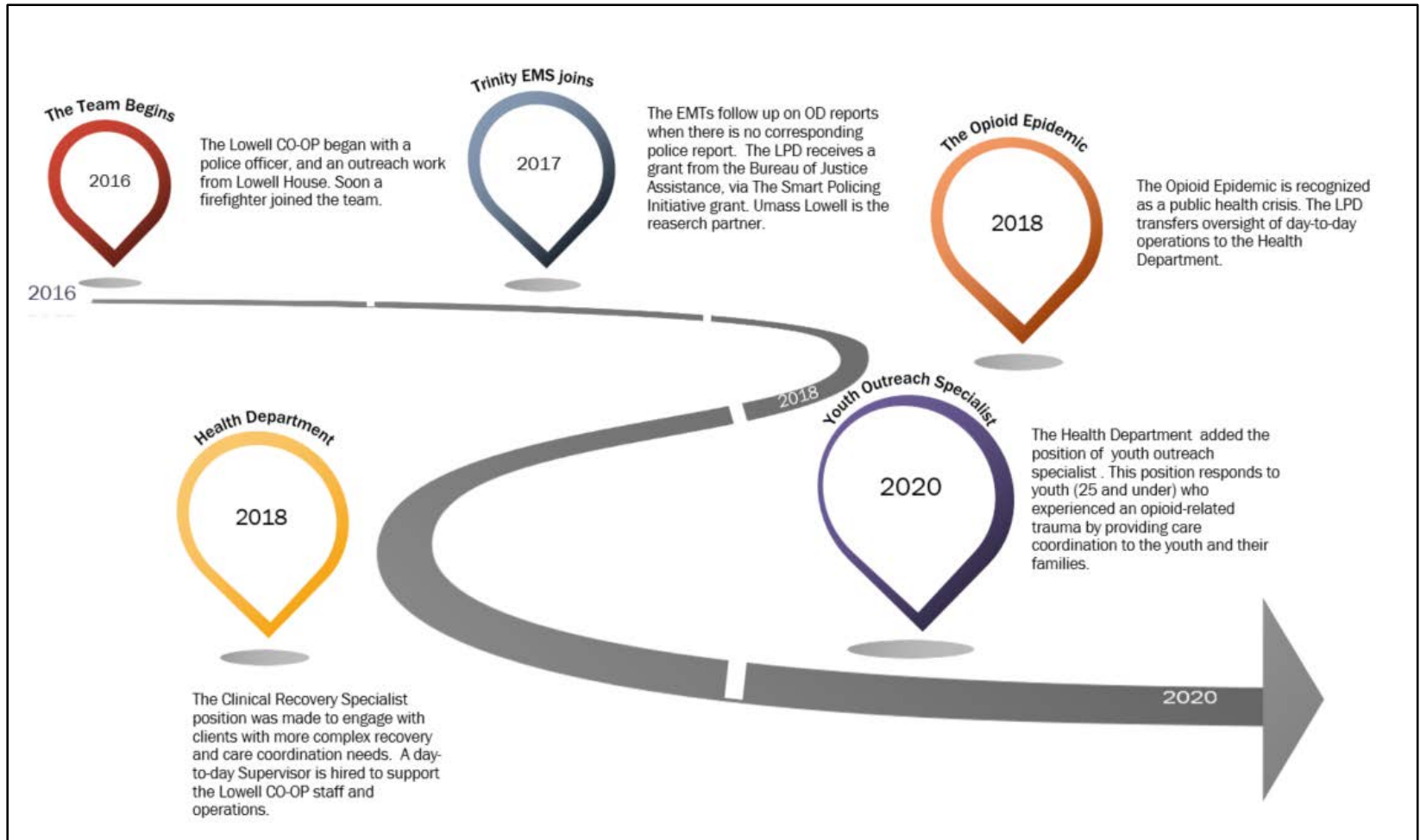
Lowell CO-OP

An innovative partnership between First Responders and Clinicians from...

- ☞ Lowell Health Department
- ☞ Lowell Police Department
- ☞ Lowell Fire Department
- ☞ Trinity EMS Inc.
- ☞ And Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery Inc.



The Timeline of the Lowell CO-OP



The Lowell CO-OP's Outreach Method

- ∞ Follows-up with survivors of an opioid overdose within 24-48 hours of a reported overdose.
- ∞ Engage in outreach in personal residences, hospitals, shelters, and homeless encampments
- ∞ Once connected to those that have overdosed, and their families the Lowell CO-OP will:
 1. Education on Substance Use and Local Resources
 2. Coordinate care with collaterals in the community
 3. Family Services (Learn to Cope, Grief services, etc.)

2019

Lowell CO-OP Quarterly Report *July - September 2019*

The Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program (CO-OP) is an innovative team made up of First Responders and Clinicians committed to reducing the number of nonfatal and fatal opioid-related overdoses in the Lowell, MA. The Lowell CO-OP is a partnership between the Lowell Police Department, Lowell Fire Department, Lowell Health Department, Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery, and Trinity EMS. The Lowell CO-OP meets clients and their loved ones where they are at, and engages with people to meet their immediate needs and long-term goals.

Lowell CO-OP in Action

The Lowell CO-OP hosted an educational table at National Night Out on August 6th. National Night Out is an annual community-building event that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie. Lowell CO-OP engaged with over 100 individuals who attended the event at the Morey Elementary School.



Fast Facts *July - Sept. 2019*

163

Total Client Encounters

32

New Clients Engaged

44

Number of Overdose Follow-Ups

54

Referrals to Treatment

50

Narcan Kits Distributed

6

Outreach Events and Presentations



Have questions? The Lowell CO-OP can be contacted via cellphone (voice or text) at 978-631-7240. You can also contact Maricia Verma, Lowell CO-OP Supervisor, at 978-866-6628 or mverma@lowellma.gov.

Relationships with Community Partners

Visit collateral agencies

- 🌀 Schools
- 🌀 Hospitals
- 🌀 Homeless Shelters
- 🌀 Medical Providers
- 🌀 Treatment Providers, etc.

Narcan Training and Distribution

Knowing how to recognize an overdose can save someone's life.

The Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program (CO-OP) is now offering **NARCAN** services **FREE OF COST** for groups and individuals of the Lowell community:



- Training sessions will be taught by Gianna Sandelli (Outreach Specialist, Lowell House Addiction Treatment and Recovery) and Evan Lucey (EMT-B, Trinity EMS).
- Training's are available to everyone, whether it be groups from an organization or individuals of a household. Virtual trainings are encouraged. In-person trainings will follow current COVID-19 guidelines.
- Narcan is available to qualified individuals within the Lowell community free of cost. Discrete, no questions ask drop-off available.
- Trainings and Narcan drop-off will be available Monday-Friday between 8am-4pm. Call to schedule a training session or Narcan drop-off.

Call **(978) 735-3228** for Narcan training at no cost to you.

Narcan Training/Distribution
(978) 735-3228
Lowell, MA

Narcan Training/Distribution
(978) 735-3228
Lowell, MA

Narcan Training/Distribution
(978) 735-3228
Lowell, MA

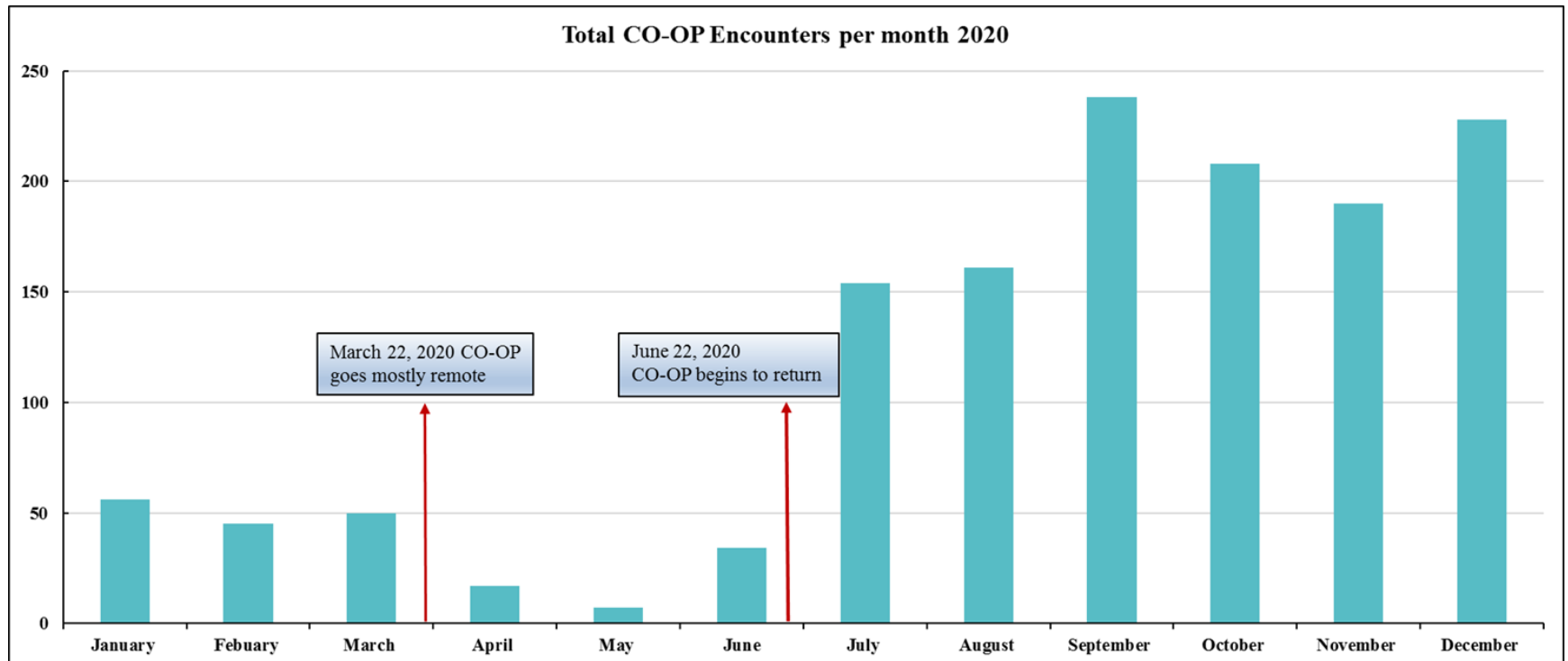
Narcan Training/Distribution
(978) 735-3228
Lowell, MA

Narcan Training/Distribution
(978) 735-3228
Lowell, MA

Narcan Training/Distribution
(978) 735-3228
Lowell, MA

Narcan Training/Distribution
(978) 735-3228
Lowell, MA

2020-COVID-19 Impact



A Harm Reduction Approach

- ✎ Does not minimize the harms associated with Substance Use
- ✎ Narcan distribution, water, bandages, information about food, shelter, other services in the community
- ✎ Connect them to treatment if they wish, assure them we will continue to talk to them if they don't
- ✎ Be a consistent presence – build rapport – build a relationship

Maricia Verma, LMHC

Supervisor Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program

Substance Abuse & Prevention Division

Lowell Health Department



Lowell Health
Department

Prevent • Promote • Protect



Cell: 978-866-6628

Office: 978-856-1260

How do our missions incorporate Public Health?

- ⌘ “the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society” (Acheson, 1988; WHO).
- ⌘ How do the SCP and the Lowell CO-OP incorporate Public Health?

Positive Impact on Environmental Health?

- Q2. How does the harm reduction aspects of the Lowell CO-OP and the SCP impact, positively, on environmental health?
 - (Less needles(SCP), people encouraged to go to shelter (CO-OP), building relationships with collaterals to help get people out of encampments (CO-OP) and provide information as to where there are needles (SCP), more people getting medical treatment reduces the likelihood of community transmission of communicable diseases. SCP: Environment: In city green spaces. Calls to the CO-OP to warn of new encampments.)

Positive Impact on Environmental Health?

Lincoln & Tanner St. Encampment



Positive Impact on Environmental Health?

YMCA Drive



Positive Impact on Environmental Health?

Hunt Falls Bridge



Positive Impact on Environmental Health?

The Tree



Questions ?



Andres Gonzalez, Syringe Collection Program Coordinator

Maricia Verma, Lowell Community Opioid Outreach Program Supervisor



Lowell Health
Department

Prevent • Promote • Protect

Contact Information

- ✉ Andres Gonzalez, Coordinator, Syringe Collection Program
 - Lowell Health Department, 107 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA 01852
 - P: 978-674-1049 Email: Agonzalez@lowellma.gov

- ✉ Maricia Verma, Supervisor, Lowell Community Outreach Program,
 - 291 Summer St, Lowell, MA 01852
 - P: 978-866-6628 Email: Mverma@lowellma.gov

References

- ∞ Public Health definition;
<https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Health-systems/public-health-services>
- ∞ Encounter Frequency Data; compiled and analyzed by
Prepared by the Center for Community Research and
Engagement at UMass Lowell.