



**“We just need someone in our corner to tell us
'Hey, we can do this. We can get better.
We can fight for our lives.'”:**

WA State Syringe Services Program Surveys and Interviews

Alison Newman, MPH



Thank you!

- Thanks to all the wonderful participants who agreed to be interviewed for this work.
- Thank you SO much to you the participating SSPs for being partners in this work.
- And thanks to all my colleagues at ADAI who work on the survey and interviews with me!
 - Susan Kingston, Caleb Banta-Green, Teresa Winstead, Jason Williams, & Leif Layman.

Surveys and interviews with PWUD

- **Bi-annual SSP survey**

- 1st statewide SSP survey conducted in 2015. Repeated in 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023. About to launch again for 2025
- Public Health-Seattle & King County conducted starting in 20xx

- **Bi-annual Qualitative Interviews**

- Started in 2018, also conducted in 2020, 2022, 2024.
- Topics include: fentanyl, methamphetamine, ideal care for OUD, intersection of harm reduction and treatment.

- **PerCH Survey in permanent supportive housing**

- Conducted in 2024

- **Interviews with program staff**





Surveys and interviews with PWUD

- **Goals of surveys and interviews are:**

- Hear from people who use drugs about their drug use, and preferences and experiences with health and SUD services.
- Learn more about the health and substance use needs of SSP participants and other people who use drugs.
- Provide SSPs and other organizations with data to inform their programs.
- Inform state-level policies and programs to improve the health of people who use drugs.

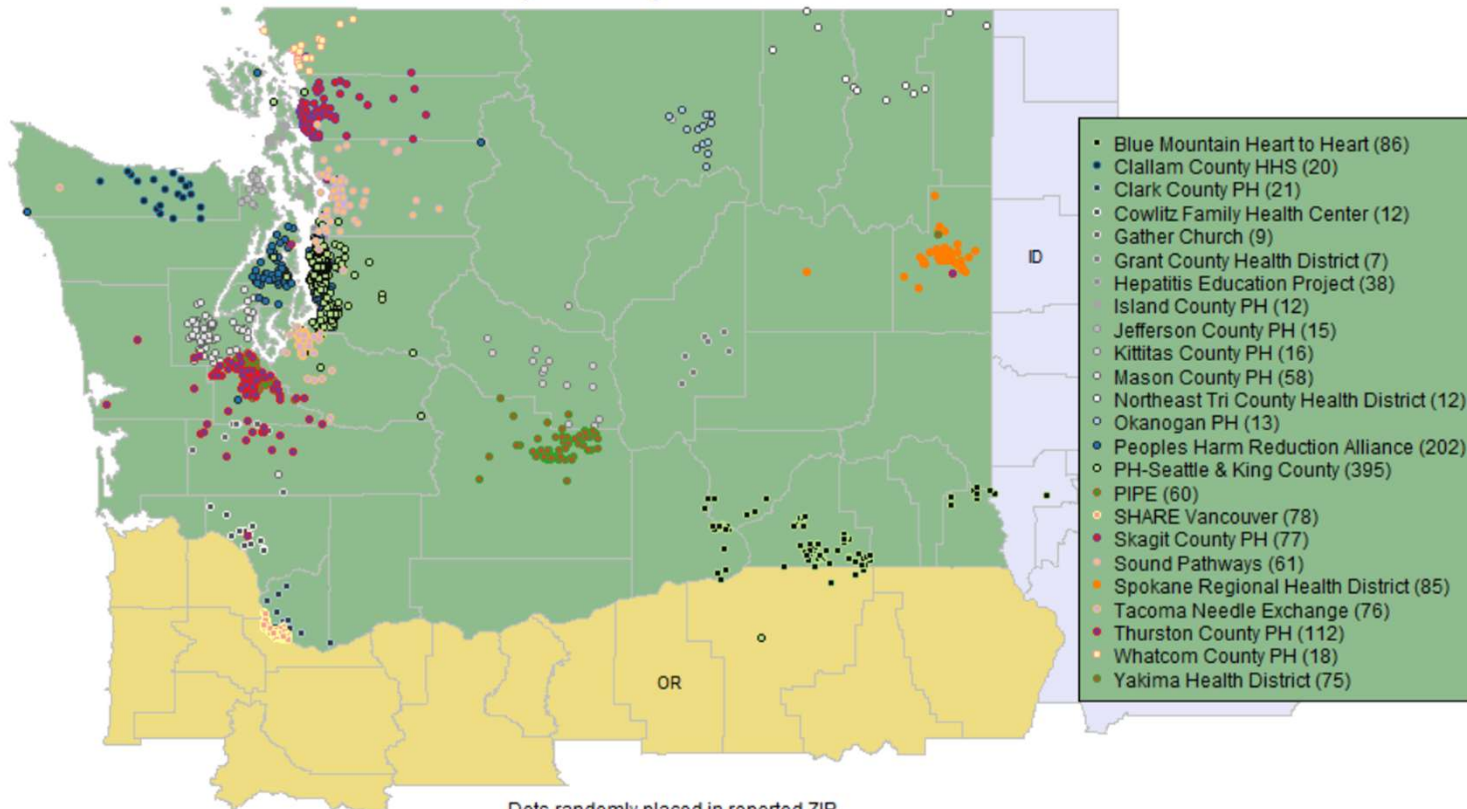


SSP Survey

- Sites provide input on questions and survey is designed in partnership with Public Health-Seattle & King County and WA Dept of Health.
- Each program owns their own data.
 - For example, People's Harm Reduction Alliance owns their data and it can't be shared with partners unless they say so.
 - This is done for several reasons: fair data ownership and to indicate to those seeking data that they should talk to the local program, because they are the experts on their program and clients
- ADAI reports on state-level data, but not on individual programs.
- Share results via reports, webinars, papers, and a one-page summary for participants.

SSP Survey 2025

Respondents by ZIP Code and site



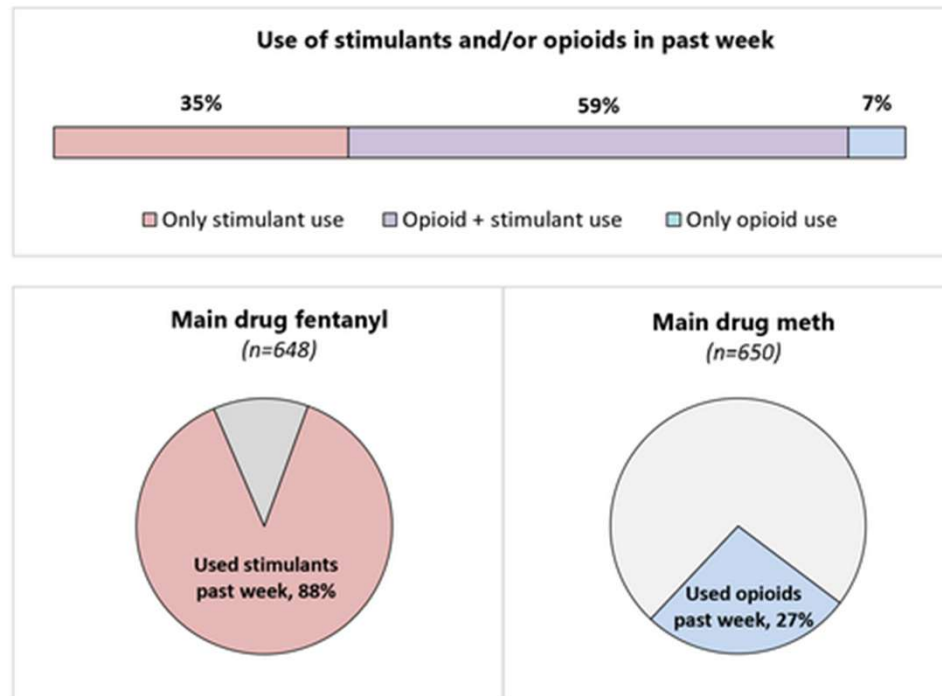
Dots randomly placed in reported ZIP
21 (of 1667) missing due to missing or unmatchable ZIP
Another 86 potential dots are beyond map scope

1,667 respondents at
24 programs.

Key insights from the 2023 SSP Survey

- Most people use both stimulants and opioids.

Figure 1: Patterns of stimulant and opioid use in the past week.



Key insights from 2023 SSP Survey

Most people would access health care or mental health care at an SSP.

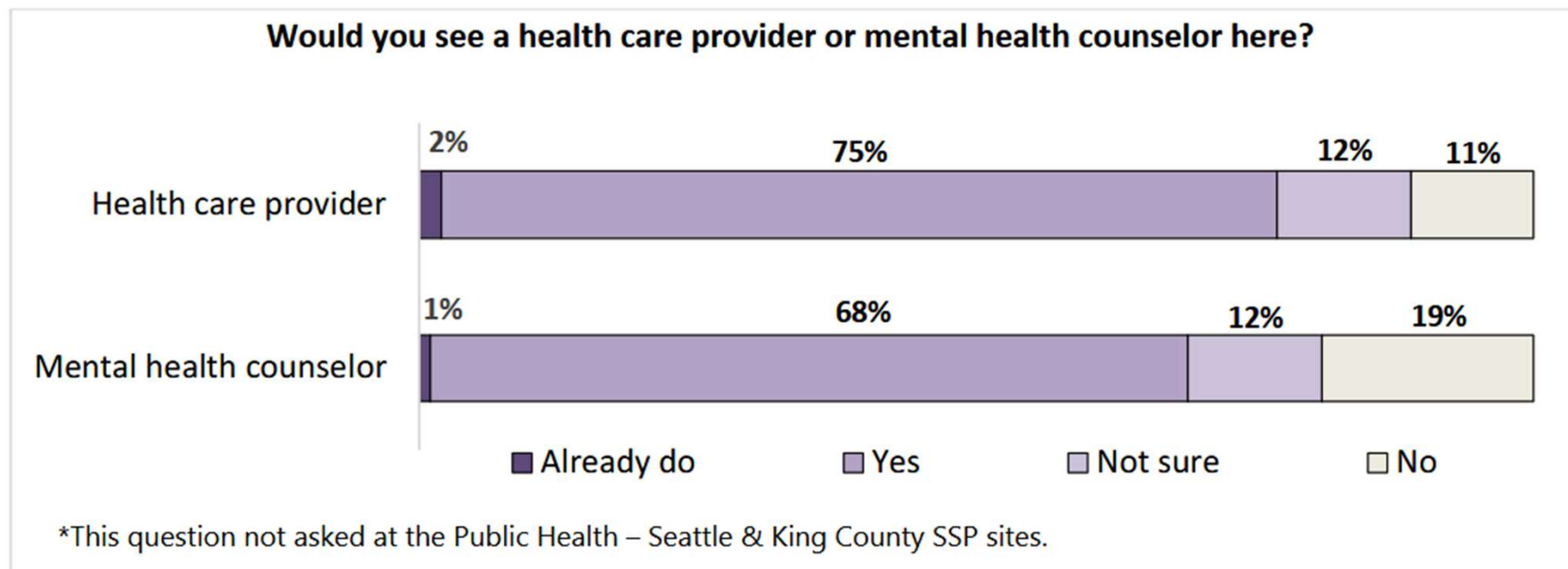
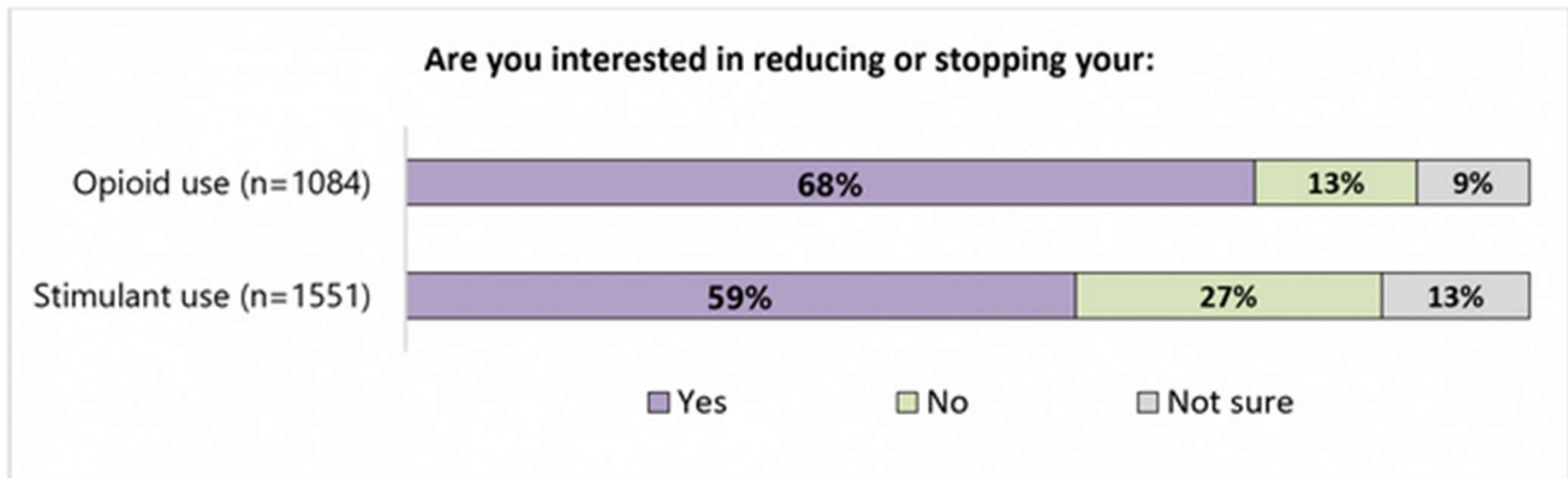


Figure 9. Willingness to access health care services located at SSPs.

Key insights from 2023 SSP Survey

Most people want to reduce or stop their opioid and/or stimulant use





This year's survey!

- Surveying started on September 8.
- More in-depth questions about jails/prisons and MOUD.
- 24 programs participating from across the state.



Qualitative Interviews

- Conduct fewer interviews, but more in-depth.
- Provides an opportunity to hear from people in their own words and learn more about the context of their lives.
- Let's us know what we don't know.

"Q: Can you think of a time when you felt most supported, and what was happening around that time?"

A: Times like this interview where I can sit down with somebody and not be treated in an off-putting way, or being put down, and still can laugh and have a good time in life. It's pretty cool."



Qualitative Interviews

- Insights include:
 - People want holistic care for their drug-related health issues, aka “one-stop shop”
 - People reported using methamphetamine to reduce opioid withdrawal symptoms.
 - Physical pain was frequently identified as a reason people used fentanyl.
 - Many interview participants reported that they did not see harm reduction and treatment as in conflict, but as having different purposes.
 - And so much more!



How are the data used?

- **Inform specific SSP and organization efforts**

- *Examples:*

- Engage and inform local stakeholders.
- Reduce stigma through sharing data about use, trends, and demographics.
- Interest in and support for safer smoking supplies.
- Show how many of their participants are responding to overdose.
- Identify which groups in their community they may need to reach out to more directly.
- Alert the local jail that only a minority of SSP participants received naloxone on release.
- Apply for supplemental funding
- Change programming at SSP and offer additional services



How are SSP survey data used?

"We love the survey it is a HUGE help and it enables us to not have to do our own data collection at our program outside of the survey 😊"

-Staff from a participating SSP



How are the data used?

- **Inform state-level efforts and programs**
- *Examples:*
 - Support for low-barrier buprenorphine programs
 - Development of WA State health hubs
 - Advance innovative approaches to embedding clinical services within SSPs
 - Support for funding SSPs
 - Reduce stigma and increase understanding of PWUD statewide

How are the data used?

Emergency Room Utilization and Methamphetamine Overdose Symptoms Among Syringe Services Program Participants in Washington State

Noah D. Frank, Caleb J. Banta-Green, Brandon L. Guthrie, Susan Kingston, Joe Tinsley, Lauren Whiteside & ...show all
Pages 1012-1019 | Published online: 18 Feb 2024

Interest in reducing methamphetamine and opioid use among syringe services program participants in Washington State

Vanessa M McMahon ^{a b}  , Susan Kingston ^c, Alison Newman ^c, Joanne D. Stekler ^{a d}
^e, Sara N. Glick ^{a g}, Caleb J. Banta-Green ^{b c}

Interest in Getting Help to Reduce or Stop Substance Use Among Syringe Exchange Clients Who Use Opioids

Frost, Madeline C. MPH; Williams, Emily C. PhD, MPH; Kingston, Susan BS; Banta-Green, Caleb J. PhD, MPH. MSW



Key takeaways

- Ask people who use drugs about their lives and preferences and listen to them.
- Build relationships with harm reduction organizations.
- Share information in a meaningful and timely way and through different channels including:
 - Reports
 - Handouts
 - Webinars
 - Presentations
 - Journal articles



Questions?

- Want to conduct your own version of the survey?
- Have questions?
 - Email me, Alison Newman, alison26@uw.edu
 - Find all past surveys and qualitative interviews here:
 - <https://adai.uw.edu/cedeer/community-surveys/>