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Canton City Public Health

# Canton City Public Health 2022 Syringe Services Program Annual Report



This report provides an update on the Canton City Public Health (CCPH) Syringe Services Program (SSP) as required by Ohio law, Ohio Revised Code 3707.57. The SSP is a program that provides syringe exchange services in the County of Stark, in the City of Canton. This report outlines all aspects of the program including the distribution and receipt of syringes. This report does not account for other sources of syringes (prescription or nonprescription) available in the county. The data in this report is taken from January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022.

On June 23, 2017, CCPH began administering the SSP known as SWAP (Stark Wide Approach to Prevention). The goal of SWAP is to protect and promote the County of Stark residents' health and safety by preventing the spread of infectious diseases associated with injection drug use, and by decreasing the number of improperly disposed syringes in the community. The goal is addressed through four major components of the program: 1) Syringe exchange/linkage and referral; 2) Syringe disposal and community cleanup; 3) Harm reduction/safer injection education 4) Community awareness and education.

Syringe exchange has been documented to be a public health intervention that reduces the transmission of bloodborne pathogens and reduces the number of improperly discarded syringes in the community. CCPH utilizes a harm reduction approach by providing people who inject drugs (PWID) with new syringes, and a place to safely dispose of used syringes. The program also provides referrals and linkage to substance abuse/mental health treatment and medical services. Syringe access programs provide an essential link to health services for uninsured and marginalized populations that do not have access to traditional health care.

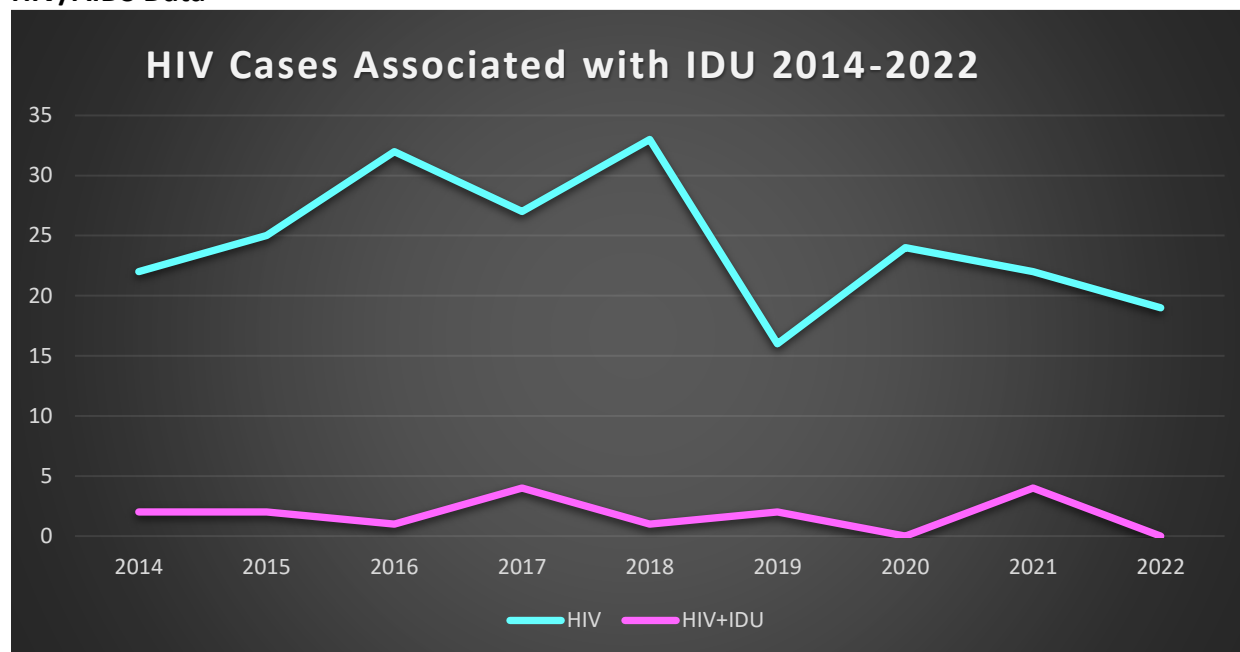
Several other aspects of the program were developed and enhanced since its inception. The SWAP program provides additional services including Narcan distribution, HIV and Hepatitis C rapid testing, administration of Hepatitis A and B vaccinations, seasonal flu vaccinations, and wound care education and treatment. Education includes verbal and printed information on HIV, hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), overdose prevention, wound care education, encouraging one-time use of needles, and safe injection practices. External referrals include drug and alcohol treatment, medical care, mental health care, domestic violence, food, clothing, and shelter.

In an effort to continuously improve SWAP, staff have consulted with other syringe exchange programs in Ohio. The SWAP Planning Group is an Ad Hoc Committee of the Stark County Opiate Task Force and consists of stakeholders including recovery, counseling and support service agencies, a family support and advocacy agency and other content experts concerning syringe exchange, disease control and drug treatment who meet on a quarterly basis. This planning group has served to provide insight and guidance to SWAP while mitigating potential negative

perceptions of the program. CCPH staff works collaboratively with law enforcement to maintain an open dialogue regarding syringe exchange and other substance abuse issues.

## REDUCING TRANSMISSION OF DISEASE

### HIV/AIDS Data



Incidence of HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed in Stark County. Source: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/hiv-aids-surveillance-program/resources/stark-county-hiv-surveillance-data-tables> Apart from the most recent year being data from the Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS). Note: IDU-associated exposure are inclusive of the total case count per year. (Ex: Stark County had 22 cases of HIV in 2014, with 2 of those cases reporting an IDU-associated exposure).

The table below summarizes newly reported cases of chronic Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS among Stark County residents from 2015 through 2022. HIV/AIDS case reporting generally takes at least 6 months to be considered complete, and all case data is subject to change as more information is collected.

### Conditions by Year of Diagnosis Stark County Residents (2015-2022)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Hepatitis C</b>	391	344	306	313	322	207	*	192
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	25	32	27	33	16	24	22	19
<b>HIV/AIDS with IDU Exposure</b>	3	1	4	2	2	0	4	0

\*Due to the COVID pandemic, unable to provide up-to-date Hepatitis C data

We are hopeful that the decline in Hepatitis C cases since 2016 may be in some way attributed to the implementation of SWAP in 2017.

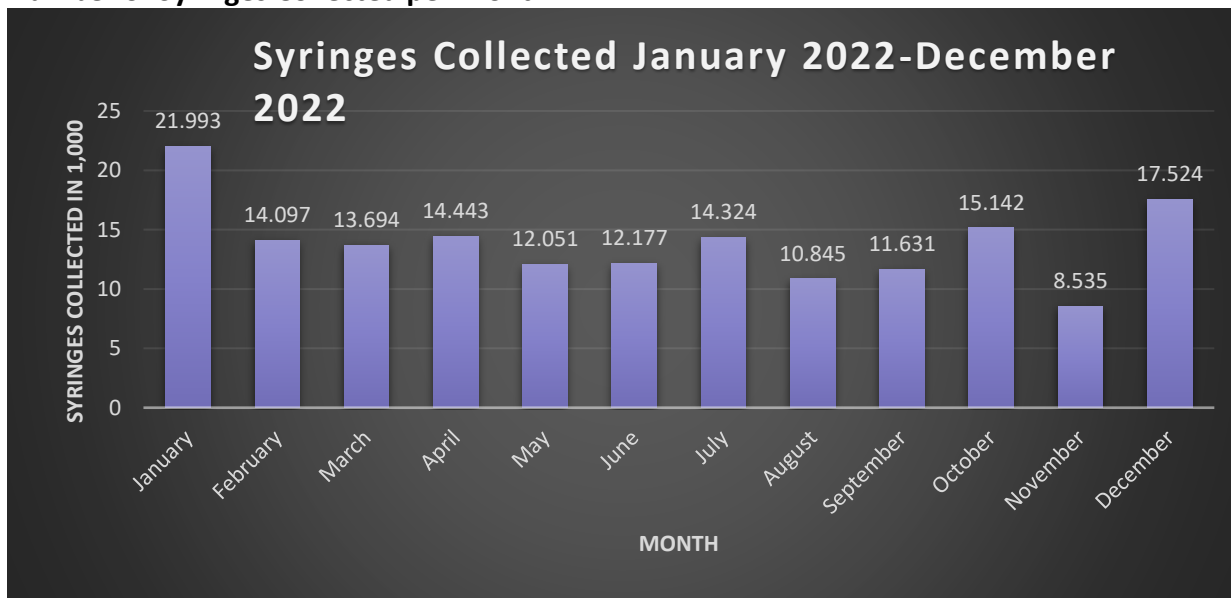
## SYRINGE SERVICES PROGRAM - SWAP

### Number of SWAP Visits by Month of Visit



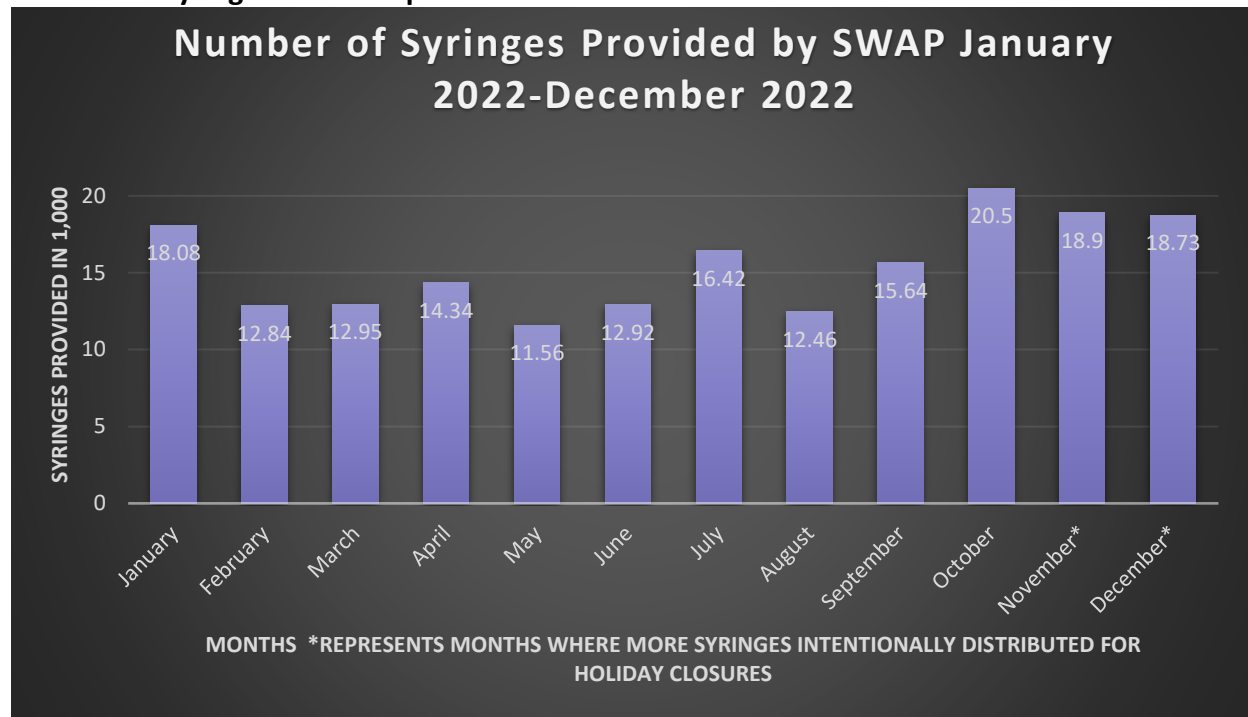
During the period from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, there were 4,901 visits to SWAP and at least 398 unduplicated clients were served by the program. July and December were the busiest months with the highest number of clients, whereas November was the lowest in client numbers due to closures. To reduce possible exposure among clients and staff operating SWAP, a modified process of exchange occurred. Staff spent time pre-packing bags of harm-reduction materials each week, as well as distribution which occurred from behind glass for approximately half of the year. A large majority of the 398 unduplicated clients were new clients, but there were also several of these individuals that could have been repeating clients with coding errors. Clients were offered Narcan during SWAP hours, and resources were posted throughout two different rooms.

### Number of Syringes Collected per Month



Above data indicates that during the period from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, SWAP collected 166,456 used syringes and distributed 185,340 sterile syringes. In the month of November, SWAP was closed for Thanksgiving and Veteran’s Day. Therefore, the program distributed two weeks’ worth of supplies the week prior to the closure.

**Number of Syringes Provided per Month**



The table above indicates the number of new syringes dispensed monthly from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022. The least number of syringes were distributed in May, and the highest amount was given out in October.

**New Developments**

SWAP continued the text alert program for interested clients so that important information about SWAP and overdoses in the area can be sent directly to participants. The program has sent out 19 mass texts in total in 2022. There were 11 alerts regarding increases in local overdoses, 6 alerts of SWAP closures or changes in procedures, and 2 alerts about Narcan drop boxes. Participation in the text alert program is completely voluntary and anonymous.

In 2022, new staff was hired filling the Early Intervention Specialist (EIS), the Linkage to Care Specialist (LTC), and the HIV/STI Prevention Health Educator positions. This team has learned the necessary skills, training, and certifications to be a vital asset to the program providing quality and equitable care to participants.

Pre-COVID operations have also been restored. OHIOCAN personnel provide fresh grilled cheese and other snacks to the clients. Staff and client interactions have reverted from behind a barrier to face-to-face, which offers a more personal and individualized experience.

The wound care clinic has been successfully implemented and executed with CCPH’s nurse practitioner treating 65 patients in 2022 for mild to severe injection-related wounds. These wounds would have otherwise gone neglected or untreated, due to stigma and bias in other healthcare settings.

Donations have provided an abundant amount of winter socks, hats, scarves, and gloves for clients.

### Demographics

The tables below reflect the utilization data and basic demographics for SWAP over the period of January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022. These values are incomplete in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. Client ID codes were not always collected, and COVID-19 was used as an identifier during that time frame. Therefore, it is possible that these values are not a full representation of the clients at SWAP.

Age Data							
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Grand Total
<b>Average Age</b>	36.5	34.2	35.3	36.2	37.8	38.1	<b>36.3</b>
<b>Max Age</b>	67	77	68	65	70	74	
<b>Min Age</b>	18	18	18	19	20	19	

Age Range: 19-74

Median Age: 36

Gender Data								
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Grand Total	%
Female	42	120	123	83	85	105	559	<b>37.3%</b>
Male	46	181	199	152	173	172	928	<b>62.0%</b>
Transgender	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	<b>0.1%</b>
Other	0	2	2	1	1	0	6	<b>0.4%</b>
Grand Total	88	304	324	236	259	277	1497	<b>100.0%</b>

Race Data								
Race	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total	Percent
White	83	274	281	200	228	242	1308	86.34%
African American	2	13	11	13	15	25	79	5.21%
Two or more races	2	4	12	14	9	0	41	2.71%
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.07%
Hispanic	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0.13%
Native American	0	1	3	0	1	5	10	0.66%
Other	0	4	5	6	1	3	19	1.25%
Unidentified	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.07%
(blank)	1	7	12	1	5	1	27	1.78%
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>1515</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Sex rates were compiled by using the population in the age ranges of those at SWAP 18-74.

<sup>2</sup>Race rates were compiled using ages 18+ in Stark County because those above the age range for SWAP could have sought services despite not being captured in our program.

SWAP participants presented from 105 different zip codes, and 67.9% of those reported were from somewhere within Stark County. SWAP does not have any requirements to reside in Stark County and will serve anyone who comes to the program.

Number of Zip Codes Served						
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Zip Codes	28	52	71	71	69	105
% of Clients from Stark County Zip Codes	54.5%	61.2%	62.0%	64.8%	67.6%	67.9%

#### OTHER SWAP PREVENTION ACTIVITIES FOR INJECTION DRUG USE

- HIV and Hepatitis C prevention education and rapid testing services
- Linkages for making follow-up medical appointments for new HIV-positive people to reduce the number of individuals falling out of care and adherence to HIV medications
- Early Intervention Specialist Navigator (EIS) provides Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) referrals and can sign clients up for Prevention Assistance Program Intervention (PAPI). Clients who are eligible can receive low to no-cost HIV prevention services
- Training in harm reduction was last completed in 2019. CCPH has a harm reduction training scheduled for January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, for all nursing staff at CCPH
- Distribution of Narcan Kits through the Integrated Naloxone Access and Infrastructure Grant through the Ohio Department of Health from Project Dawn
- Vaccination and education on Hepatitis A/B, seasonal flu and COVID-19
- The wound care clinic can prescribe antibiotics when appropriate.

<b>Comprehensive Services &amp; Referrals</b>				
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>Average per Visit (2022)</b>	<b>Average per Month* (2022)</b>
<b>Narcan Kits</b>	1,322	2,013	42.83	183
<b>Referral</b>	-	37	0.79	3.36
<b>HIV Testing</b>	10	16	0.34	1.45
<b>Hepatitis C Testing</b>	3	4	0.09	0.36
<b>Wound Care Education (Until 3/11/2022)</b>	4	2	0.2	0.8
<b>Wound Care Clinic (Implemented 3/18/2022)</b>	-	65	1.76	7.65
<b>Vaccinations</b>	-	11	0.23	1
<b>Total Services &amp; Referrals</b>	<b>1,339</b>	<b>2,148</b>	<b>45.70</b>	<b>195.27</b>

\*Average per month was reduced to 11 months to account for the time SWAP was closed during 2022

Due to an increase in overdoses throughout 2022, SWAP has noticed an increase in the number of Narcan kits distributed and utilized. The program utilized the Integrated Naloxone Access and Infrastructure Grant through the Ohio Department of Health from Project Dawn, to distribute Naloxone kits.

#### **IDENTIFIED AREAS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**

1. Referrals/Linkages  
CCPH, with the assistance of CommQuest Recovery Services, will continue to improve the referral and linkages aspects of the program. CCPH continues to develop relationships with other recovery organizations in the community to improve the quantity and quality of referrals, linkages to treatment, and services to SWAP participants.
2. Program area expansion/Utilizing space/New location  
Due to increased participation in SWAP, CCPH would benefit from a larger location to house the program.
3. Program Nurse  
In order to provide all services offered, CCPH is in the process of hiring an immunization nurse to provide vaccinations.

#### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

To date, the cost to operate SWAP is estimated to be approximately \$125,000. It is anticipated that program costs will increase as the need increases. Initially, funding was secured from United Way Foundation (to purchase NeedleShark grinder), startup funds from AIDS Healthcare Foundation, and a grant from the Comer Family Foundation to purchase syringes. With the addition of the Early Intervention Services grant, funds can be allocated to the purchase of harm-reduction materials. With the opiate money given to the city of Canton, the SWAP program received \$15,015.60 to purchase syringes. The program also received \$5,127.66 from the nursing clinic service revenue to purchase syringes.

**Table: SWAP Budget**

<b>Annual SWAP Costs (1.1.22-12.31.2022)</b>	
<b>Line Item</b>	<b>Annual</b>
<b>Personnel (Salary/Benefits)</b>	\$68,828.34
<b>Syringes (by the city of Canton allocation)</b>	\$20,143.26
<b>Supplies</b>	\$39,056.74
<b>Total Cost of SWAP</b>	<b>\$128,028.34</b>

**CONCLUSION**

1. Access to sterile needles is making a positive difference in Stark County and remains an important component of the overall strategy to reduce transmission of blood-borne diseases.
2. Needle exchange services in Stark County play a significant role in the strategy to reduce the number of improperly discarded syringes.
3. Syringe service programs allow for one-on-one interactions with clients at risk while providing preventative measures for overdose-related deaths.

**2023 Goals**

- Continue anonymous, safe services to reduce the risk of HIV and Hepatitis C infection in our community by promoting continuous involvement of clients and encouraging them to tell others about SWAP
- Continue to educate clients on the importance of safe injection practices
- Continue Naloxone access and overdose prevention education and resources
- Continue to inform clients at each visit of resources available in the community
- Continue to offer free HIV and Hepatitis C testing and counseling at each visit
- Continue offering free Hepatitis A & B, seasonal flu, and COVID-19 vaccines to participants
- Continue dialog with clients regarding the improvement of SWAP services
- Continue to offer free wound care during SWAP hours
- Establish sustainable and reliable funding for the program