

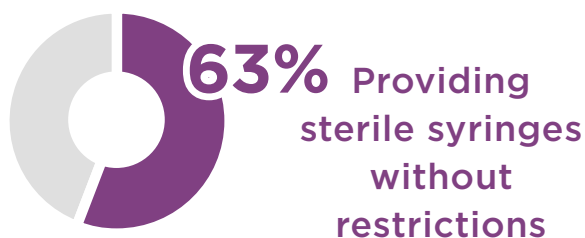
# Survey of syringe services programs in the United States (2020–2021) shows use of best practices but challenges remain

## OVERVIEW

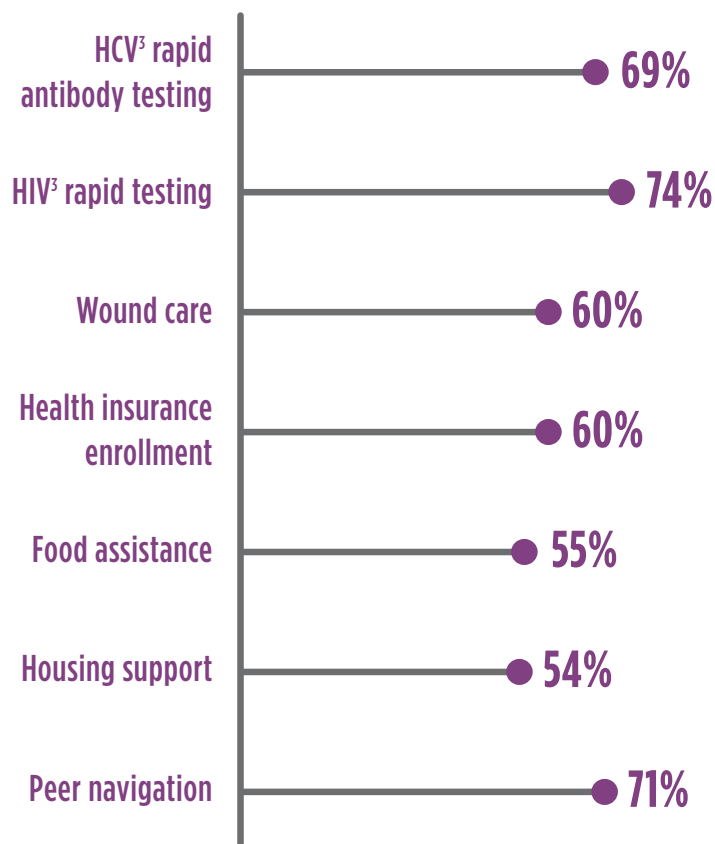
Funded by CDC<sup>1</sup> and implemented by the University of Washington, the National Syringe Services Program (SSP) Evaluation Survey, also known as the Dave Purchase Memorial Survey (2020–2021),<sup>2</sup> is a national, cross-sectional survey of SSPs operating during 2020 or 2021.

- SSPs known to the North American Syringe Exchange Network (NASEN) were invited to participate.
- 158 SSPs completed the survey.

### SSPs ARE USING BEST PRACTICES



### THE MAJORITY OF SSPs PROVIDED ONSITE CLINICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICES INCLUDING:



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention

<sup>1</sup>Funding for this project was provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under cooperative agreement PS19-1909, National Harm Reduction Technical Assistance and Syringe Services Program Monitoring and Evaluation, award number NU65PS923685.

<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Program and Operational Characteristics of Syringe Services Programs in the United States—2020 and 2021. National Syringes Services Programs Report 1. Published August 1, 2023. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/131788>.

<sup>3</sup>Abbreviations: HCV = hepatitis C virus, HIV = human immunodeficiency virus.

## THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN SYRINGE SERVICES INCREASED



SSPs reported serving an average of about **1,600 people annually**.

From 2020 to 2021, the average number of **syringes distributed increased 3%** from 464,000 to 480,000.

Among those SSPs that were open both in 2020 and 2021, the **number of participants increased 26%**.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Fewer than 50% of SSPs provided:



HCV laboratory-based testing (47%)

medications for opioid use disorder treatment (32%), and

non-COVID-19 vaccination (40%)<sup>4</sup>

Ensuring **continuous and reliable access to naloxone and syringes** would enable SSPs to have greater impact.



**More than 60% of SSPs reported at least one barrier** to naloxone distribution in 2021, including a shortage of naloxone (39%).

**Limited or lack of law enforcement support** and **local policies** that restrict program services continue to be a challenge for SSPs.



## COVID-19 Pandemic-specific Challenges

Many SSPs that operated in both 2020 and 2021 indicated specific impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their services during that period.

Approximately **one-quarter (27%) of SSPs reported site closures** and **51% reduced their hours or days of operation**.

Many programs also reported **changes in their physical space (57%), staff shortage or loss (51%), and reductions in funding (20%)**.

40% of SSPs experienced **disruptions in the supply of syringes** due to the pandemic.

<sup>4</sup>Includes influenza, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and human papilloma virus vaccinations.