

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

Harm Reduction Work Group Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2026 via Zoom

(The following minutes and discussion are for informational purposes only and do not represent the position of the University of Colorado.)

Present:

Sierra Andrews, Co-chair
Nikki Brooker, You Are Not Alone (YANA)
Mikaela DiGiorgio, La Plata County Public Health
Arlo Cruz, Adams County Public Health
Clarita Inman, Colorado Health Network
Grace Kane, Colorado Health Network/Access Point
Lojohomoi Lokonobei, Ilalle Hill Organization
Kyle Mauk, Purple Mountain Recovery
Boulder County Public Health: Georgia Babatsikos, Becky Milanski
CDPHE: Sophie Feffer, Sam Bourdon, Jericho Dorsey, Teresa Will, Cody Brown
Consortium: Jen Place, Jessica Eaddy, Hilary Bryant, Rosemarie MacDowell

Absent: See attached work group roster.

Jessica Eaddy, Program Manager, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the May 2026 work group meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Presentation: Syringe Access Programs (Sophie Feffer, CDPHE Office of STI/HIV/Viral Hepatitis Drug User Health Coordinator):

Sophie is the Drug User Health Coordinator at CDPHE's Office of STI, HIV, and Viral Hepatitis. The office works with people who use drugs, as well as the organizations and professionals that provide care and support. A copy of the presentation slides is attached to the minutes. Presentation summary:

The State of Colorado funds a HIV prevention program called CHAPP (Colorado HIV Alliance for Prevention, Care and Treatment), a syringe access program. The CHAPP Board and State Board of Health determine HIV prevention funding allotments, which are used solely for HIV prevention. Overdose prevention is an integral part of drug user health and syringe access programming efforts.

Sophie explained the epidemiology related to injected drug use and HIV in Colorado and the surveillance measures that inform the data. Currently, one in seven people living with HIV in Colorado have reported injection drug use when diagnosed, which represents less than one percent of the state population but accounts for ten percent of new HIV diagnoses. Black and Brown communities are disproportionately affected. There has been a decrease in HIV and Hepatitis C among people using and injecting drugs, which indicates better access to sterile equipment. The decrease has also impacted occurrences of soft tissue infections, MRSA,

bruising, vein collapse, and abscesses. Syringe services programs contribute to healthier communities.

Sophie discussed a National HIV Behavioral Surveillance (NHBS) survey that was conducted among all legal syringe access programs in the Denver metro area. Fifty percent of the programs now offer telehealth linkage to care, on-site wound care support, on-site phlebotomy, and vaccinations when possible for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, flu, and COVID. The vast majority of programs provide rapid HIV and hepatitis C testing on-site, linkage to care, and PrEP and PEP linkages. All programs provide distribution of naloxone, condoms, used syringe disposal, and referrals to substance use treatment.

Research shows that users of syringe access programs are five times more likely to enter drug treatment and three times more likely to stop using drugs than people who do not use these programs. Sixty percent of legal syringe access programs are located within an urban county along the I-25 corridor from Fort Collins to Pueblo and in Mesa County and the Grand Junction area. Twenty percent are located in a rural/urban county (such as Weld and Jefferson counties). The remaining 20 percent are located in true rural or frontier counties.

Sophie concluded her presentation citing the many positive impacts of syringe access programs and encouraged meeting participants to utilize the presentation slides as a resource. For additional information: Sophie.feffer@state.co.us

Discussion:

Participants discussed community resistance to the presence of syringe access programs (including the presence of efforts within parks), appropriate responses to the complaints, and how to continue to support the programs.

Georgia Babatsikos, Boulder County Public Health, spoke about the importance of community education and training to help people understand the intent and benefits of programs. She offered to share training information.

Becky Milanski said her organization has conducted harm reduction education, and it has made a huge difference. Ongoing education is necessary for law enforcement, given turnover among law enforcement personnel.

Lojohomoi Lokonobei, with the Ilalle Hill Organization, asked about resources that might be available for his organization. He recently attended the Black Coloradans Substance Use Action Forum held in April and just joined the Harm Reduction Work Group. Jessica referred him to RiseAbove Colorado for youth-specific prevention information. <https://www.riseaboveco.org/> Sophie will also email information to him.

Extreme Weather Resources for People Who Use Drugs and Syringe Access Programs:

Jessica mentioned that the Washington State Department of Health has put together syringe service program preparedness resources for extreme weather conditions. A copy of the guide is attached to the minutes.

The work group discussed other resources that can be accessed during adverse weather or fire conditions.

International Overdose Awareness Day (August 31) Events:

Meeting participants discussed events that will be held throughout the state.

2026 International Awareness Day Events: <https://www.overdoseday.com/events-2026/>

Member Updates:

Arlo Cruz reported that Adams County has seen an increase in syphilis cases within the past several weeks. Sophie said there has been an increase in syphilis across the state, with Mesa, El Paso, and Pueblo counties reporting the largest increases. Congenital syphilis cases have been reported in the southeast part of the state. CDPHE can provide syphilis educational material.

Educational Topic Suggestions:

Arlo asked about possible in-person meetings to encourage networking among representatives from various organizations. Jessica explained that the Consortium work groups used to meet in person on campus and virtually, but changed to virtual meetings only during the COVID epidemic. In addition, budget constraints have also impacted in-person events. The Consortium does hold an all-day in-person (hybrid/virtual) meeting annually. The 2026 annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 4th. The annual meetings highlight the work of all Consortium work groups.

Adjournment/Next Meeting:

The work group meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. The next work group meeting will be held on Thursday, September 10, 2026 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Attachments: Work group roster, Presentation slides, Washington State Department of Health Guide.

Relevant chat links:

CDPHE Colorado HIV Alliance for Prevention, Care and Treatment:
<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/cdphe/colorado-hiv-alliance-prevention-care-and-treatment>

Community involvement: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/sti-hiv-community-involvement>

Drug Policy Alliance Safety First: Real Drug Education for Teens:
<https://drugpolicy.org/resource/safety-first/>

Salt Lake Harm Reduction: <https://www.shrpexchange.org/youth-harm-reduction>

CDPHE Colorado Drug Overdose Statistics:
<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/registries-and-vital-statistics/state-unintentional-drug-overdose-reporting-system-sudors/Colorado>

Weather, health, and safety guidance for communities: <https://www.ph.app/>