

Introduction

- Drug overdose has accounted for over one million deaths nationwide since 2000, and most of these are caused by opioids (Klobucista & Martinez, 2023).
- Calvert County Harm Reduction Program utilizes peer recovery specialists (PRS) within the workforce to help gain rapport with participants. PRS are people in long term recovery who work to provide support for individuals with substance use and opioid use disorders in an effort to reduce harm for the identified population.
- This research will explore how many individuals have been served by Calvert County's harm reduction program and with what types of services by answering the following questions:
 - How many people were served through Calvert County's harm reduction program, by selected cities within the county?
 - Which services are individuals requesting through the harm reduction program?

Method

- The data was collected by Harm Reduction Program staff during street outreach for two full years from March 1st, 2021 to March 1st, 2023.
- Using frequency counts, outreach measures of individuals who engaged with the Calvert County harm reduction program in select cities/towns are examined.
- The data includes statistics on the number of unduplicated individuals that were served through the program.
- Data was also analyzed to determine the number of individuals that requested various service types, including peer services, through referrals.

Results

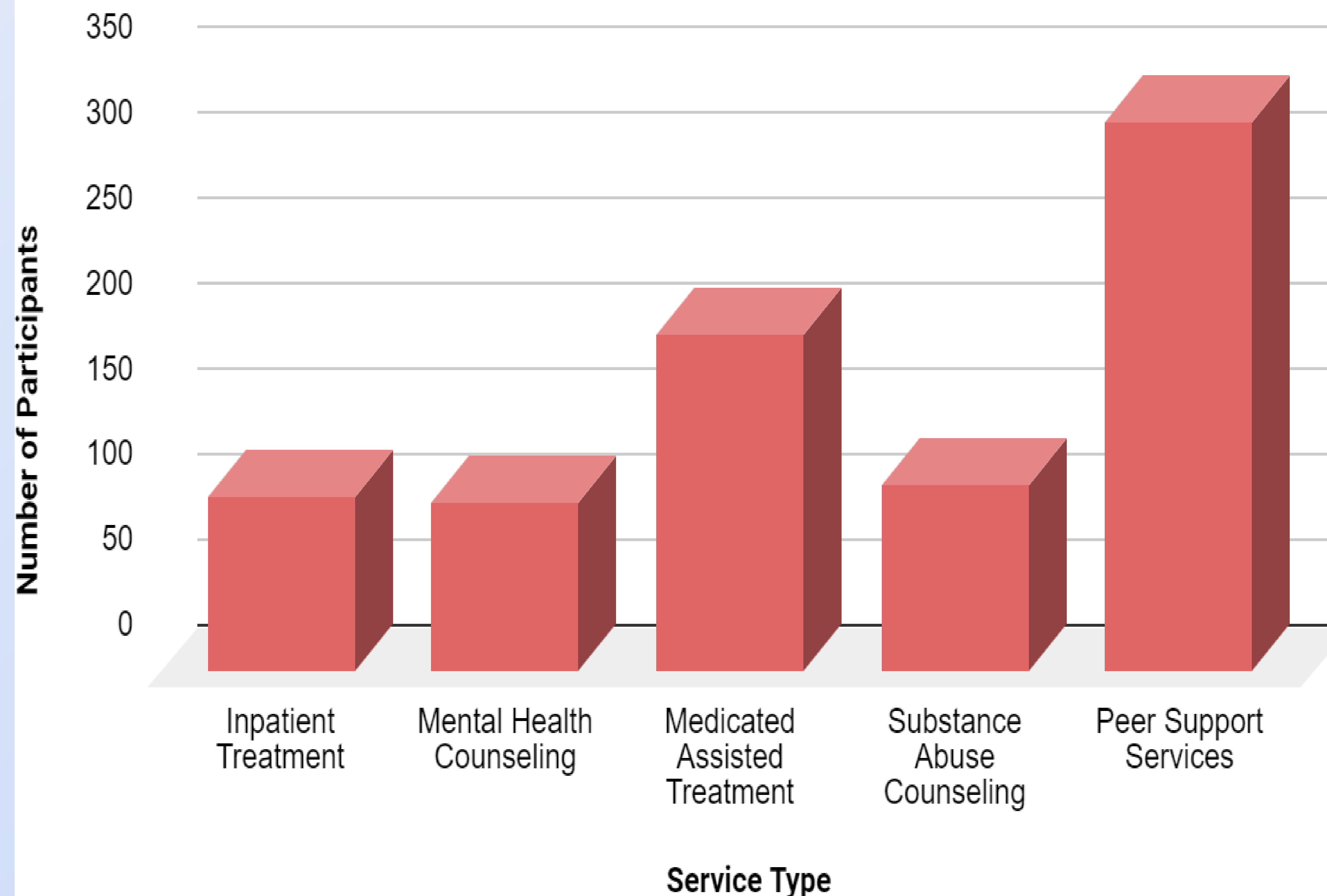
- **Table 1.** Out of six cities/towns with a combined population size of 20,304 the harm reduction program served 3.67% of the total population in serviced cities.
- **Table 2.** Displays the number of different types of services requested by harm reduction participants. Statistics show that PRS is the most requested service ($n=324$). Medication assisted treatment was also requested by numerous participants ($n=197$), with inpatient treatment and counseling related to mental health and substance use all receiving about 100 requests for service.

Utilization of Peer-Delivered

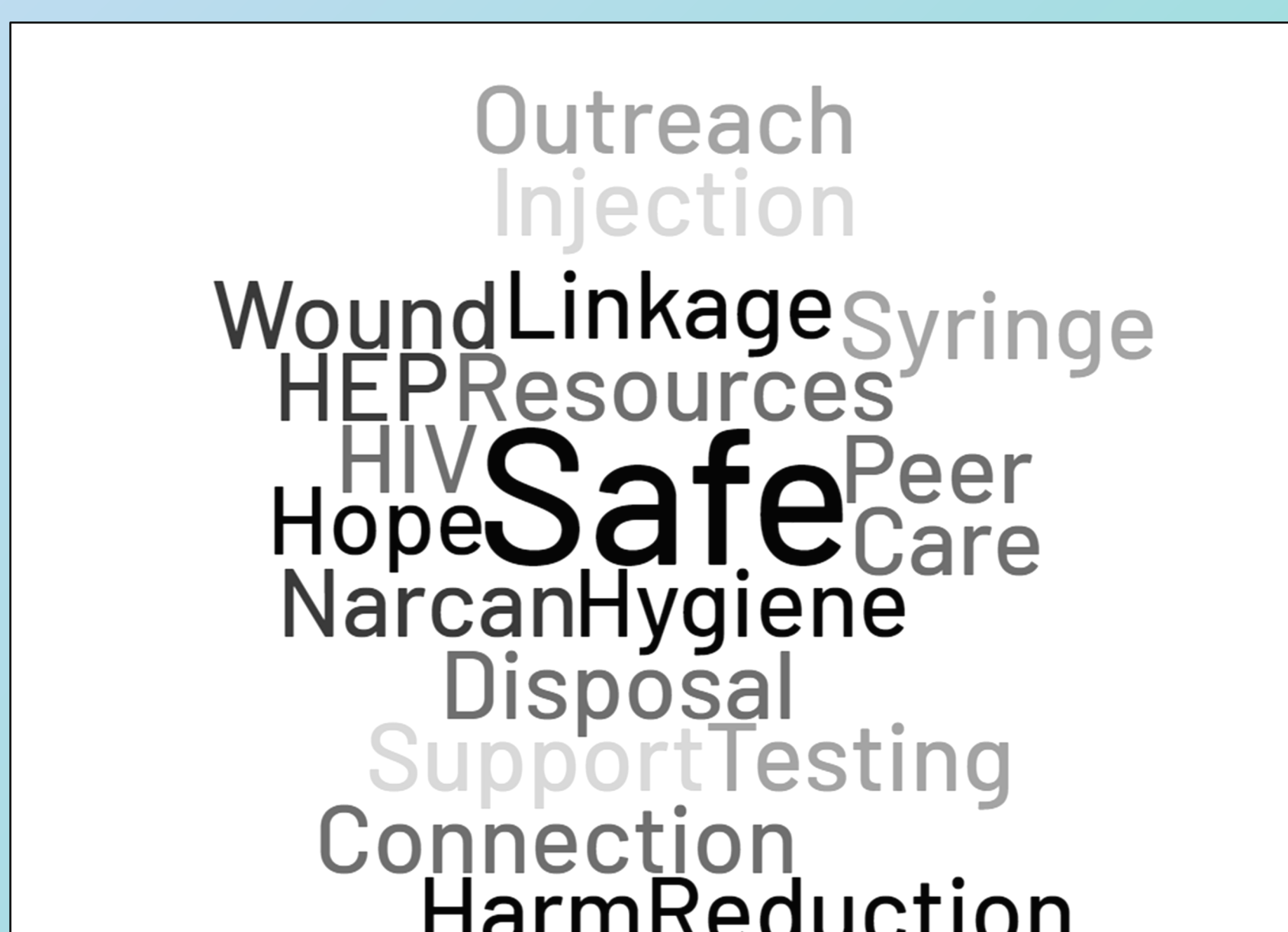
Harm Reduction Services Within a Rural County

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Services Requested By Harm Reduction Participants



Peer Support Specialists were the top requested service, supporting safer practices and helping save lives in Calvert County



Meeting People Where They Are At!

Discussion

- Results from the current study indicate that individuals in active addiction have multiple engagements with PRS. Relatable peers with culturally specific knowledge should be used to increase culturally congruent services.
- Harm reduction staff participates in daily street outreach to meet people where they are and gives the opportunity for direct service.
- This study shows active engagement with harm reduction services in a rural setting – higher in some places than others. Further analysis needed to assess how to increase usage in areas where need isn't fully met.
- Further research incorporating mixed methods can best capture community impact and user experience to scientifically identify opportunities to sustain life and stabilize health while helping to initiate and sustain substance use recovery.

Location	Population	Unduplicated Participants	% of Population Served
Saint Leonard	790	64	8.10%
Lusby	2,144	80	3.73%
Huntingtown	3,029	34	0.11%
Prince Frederick	3,433	487	14.19%
Chesapeake & North Beach	8,733	50	0.01%
Dunkirk	2,175	30	0.01%
Totals	20,304	745	3.67%

Table 1. Calvert County Population Served Through Harm Reduction Program, 2021-2023

Conclusion

- It was believed that harm reduction services provided by PRS would be beneficial for the community.
- This research project indicated a need for opioid overdose prevention services in Calvert County based on it having some of the highest rates in the state.
- Nearly 750 participants used the program and PRSs were the top service requested by participants.
- Calvert County harm reduction peers have developed strong relationships and deeply engaged with the community. By PRS having a non-biased, zero judgment approach they have opened the conversation for safer practices with the county.
- Other rural counties and municipalities nationwide should consider expansion of harm reduction services and the use of PRS to further support individuals for their recovery and save more lives.