



Harm Reduction in Kensington, Philadelphia

Student Interns: Lydia Lutz, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine; Mandy Perez, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine

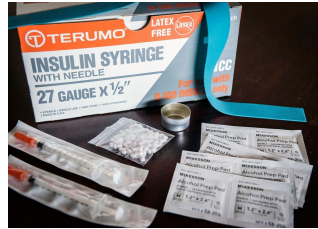
Academic Preceptors: Dr. Hillary Bogner, MD, MSCE, University of Pennsylvania Health System; Dr. Christopher Renjilian, MD, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Community Preceptors: Dr. Maggie Lowenstein, MD, MPhil, MSHP; Kaelee Shepherd, MPH, STEP Coordinator at Prevention Point Philadelphia; M Holliday-Davis, STEP Coordinator at Prevention Point Philadelphia



Prevention Point Philadelphia

Prevention Point Philadelphia is a comprehensive social services agency dedicated to harm reduction and accessible healthcare for communities affected by drug use and poverty. Since its origin as an underground syringe exchange program 30 years prior, Prevention Point has expanded their services to include overdose prevention, wound care, medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorders, Narcan training and distribution, meal services, and case management related to housing, healthcare, and other intersecting issues affecting the community. Prevention Point works toward equity, justice, and unconditional support for individuals and communities impacted by risk behaviors.



Reflection

Harm reduction encompasses evidence-based practices that diminish the adverse consequences associated with drug use and other risk behaviors. This approach recognizes that risk behaviors are an integral facet of human society and should not preclude individuals partaking in them from receiving equitable care and protection. Harm reduction at Prevention Point Philadelphia includes Narcan distribution and training, use of fentanyl test strips, syringe exchange, and supply of safe(r) injection kits, as well as case management and connection to social services in order to meet participants' needs for shelter, food, healthcare, and stability. Simply put, harm reduction is life-saving. People who die from substance use disorders - whether due to overdose, associated health problems such as HIV/AIDS and untreated wounds, or the conditions forced upon them by addiction and its resultant marginalization - cannot recover. Regardless of whether a person is in active addiction, engaged in medication-assisted treatment, or in recovery, they are worthy of safety and dignified care.

Syringe Exchange

The interns participated in Narcan distribution and training at a street-side mobile clinic, stationed at a location of recent overdose surges. Narcan (naloxone) is an opioid antagonist, given intranasally or intramuscularly, to reverse overdose. This mobile site also gave out Fentanyl test strips, so that people who use drugs can be aware of fentanyl present in their supply. Additionally, the interns joined the Overdose Prevention Team for Narcan outreach in Kensington, distributing doses to community members on the street and in local businesses.

Overdose Prevention

The interns distributed syringes and safe supplies for injecting drugs to participants in PPP. Safe supplies included cookers, cotton, tourniquets, water and saline, and alcohol wipes. The purpose of safe injection kits is provide participants with new, clean needles and supplies so they do not have to reuse or share them with others. This prevents the spread of bloodborne diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C associated with sharing needles.

COVID-19 Vaccination

COVID-19 Vaccines			
Why should I get a COVID vaccine?			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Protect yourself against COVID-19. Protect others against COVID-19. Get back to normal life. 			
COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 3 vaccines approved in the US will protect you against severe COVID-19 if you are fully vaccinated, the chance of serious disease or death from COVID-19 is nearly zero. The vaccine works through all of the normal safety steps to be approved for use. The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 because there is no living virus in the shot. The risk of getting COVID-19 is at least 100 times greater than the risk of vaccine side effects. 			
Vaccines in the US	Janssen	Pfizer	Moderna
Age	18+	12+	18+
Number of shots	1 dose	2 shots, 3 weeks apart	2 shots, 4 weeks apart
After getting my vaccine, when will I be protected against COVID-19?	2 weeks after vaccination	2 weeks after 2nd dose	2 weeks after 2nd dose

Side effects	
	<p>Side effects last from a few hours to a few days.</p> <p>Not everyone will have the same side effects to the vaccine.</p> <p>Severe disease from COVID-19 is more dangerous than the side effects of vaccines.</p>
Common Questions About Vaccines	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do I need a vaccine if I already had COVID-19? No. We don't know how long your body's protection against the virus lasts. Vaccines protect you from getting COVID-19 again. Is the vaccine safe for people who are pregnant? No. People with a substance use disorder are at higher risk of serious COVID-19. Vaccination is the best way to prevent severe disease or death. Can I get the vaccine if I am taking medication for a mental health condition or substance use disorder? Yes. The vaccine is safe to use with these medications. Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant? Yes. All three vaccines are available to pregnant people in the US. Though scientists and doctors are learning that vaccines are safe for pregnant people and babies, you should talk with your doctor or nurse about any risks or questions that you have. Can I get the vaccine if I have a history of serious drug allergies or allergies to other medications not related to the vaccine? Yes. Unless you are allergic to one of the ingredients in the shot, you should not have an allergic reaction. If you have questions about allergies, talk to your doctor or nurse. 	<p>The COVID vaccine is FREE for everyone in the United States, even if you do not have insurance or are undocumented.</p>