

Abstract

Interventions that reduce the burden of infectious disease and addiction in the unhoused population are vital to improving the health of this vulnerable group of individuals, as this population has an average 30-year reduction in life expectancy compared to the general population. Increases in injection drug usage (IDU) have led to higher incidences of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and soft tissue infections, undermining national initiatives to address the HIV epidemic and reduce the burden of infectious diseases. The aim of this project is to provide harm reduction kits during outreach to empower unhoused individuals with IDU with the choice to have safer and more self-directed lives. Currently, we have completed harm reduction training, identified community sites, and assembled/started distributing harm reduction kits. We are working on creating an IRB-approved survey where we can measure the impact of said interventions on our community. The survey will be given to people who are currently experiencing homelessness and are visited by outreach workers in their encampments or who attend mobile clinics in Commerce City and Aurora. We also plan to interview 30 participants at the 6 months post initial contacts to gain detailed insights regarding the impact and effectiveness of the distribution of the harm reduction kit.