HARM REDUCTION IN THE DETROIT COC

September 2025

WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

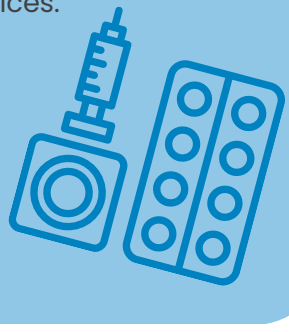
Harm reduction is helping people make safer choices about drug use without judging them or forcing them to stop using. It means giving people tools and help—like clean syringes, medicine that stops overdose (naloxone), and teaching them how to stay safer—so they and the people around them stay healthy and alive. Harm reduction doesn't say drug use is wrong—it says we can make it less harmful.

HISTORY OF HARM REDUCTION

- In the 1990s and 2000s, small grassroots groups in Michigan and Detroit began syringe exchange programs, even when state law still created barriers.
- Since the 1990s, Detroit has authorized syringe service programs (SSPs) locally; statewide authorization expanded in the late 2010s–2020s via MDHHS support and policy changes
- In 2022, Public Act 176 was signed, making it easier for community groups to give out naloxone without a doctor's prescription.
- That same year, Detroit providers began installing free harm reduction vending machines at clinics, where people could get naloxone, syringes, soap, and other supplies.
- In 2025, the Detroit Health Department launched 25 Wellness Stations across the city to give out naloxone kits, fentanyl test strips, and safer sex supplies.

SCOPE OF HARM REDUCTION

- Harm reduction programs in Detroit mainly serve people who use drugs, people experiencing homelessness, LGBTQ+ youth, and returning citizens.
- The Detroit Health Department, Harm Reduction Michigan, and local nonprofits run many of these services.
- Services include clean syringe distribution, naloxone kits, fentanyl test strips, and overdose education. These programs also connect people to housing, health care, and recovery support if they want it.
- Studies show Syringe Service Programs (SSPs) prevent HIV/HCV and support overdose prevention; Detroit programs provide these services.









WHY HARM REDUCTION MATTERS

- **Saves lives:** Naloxone can reverse an opioid overdose in minutes. Michigan records thousands of overdose reversals each year as access expands.
- **Stops disease spread:** Syringe service programs help prevent HIV and Hepatitis C by giving people clean supplies.
- **Builds Community trust:** Harm reduction treats people with respect, making it easier for them to connect to doctors, housing, or recovery when they are ready.
- **Saves money:** Every $1 spent on clean syringe programs saves ~$7 in health care costs by preventing diseases.
- **Strengthens communities:** When people are healthier and safer, families and neighborhoods are stronger too.

ADVOCACY & POLICY

- Thanks to the Public Act 176 (passed in 2022), it's easier for community groups to give out naloxone directly to those in need.
- Detroit has worked with state and federal partners to expand syringe service programs and overdose prevention funding.
- The Detroit Health Department and local nonprofits are pushing for more support for harm reduction and housing programs
- Advocates continue to fight stigma and call for more funding so harm reduction can reach every neighborhood

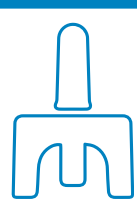
GET INVOLVED



Contact Elected Officials: Ask your lawmakers to fund harm reduction and overdose prevention programs!



Support Local Groups Volunteer or donate to local organizations like the Ruth Ellis Center, Detroit Phoenix Center, DHD, or MHRC.



Carry Naloxone Free kits are at Wellness Stations, the Health Department, and some pharmacies.

SOURCES AND MORE INFORMATION:

- **DETROIT HEALTH DEPARTMENT :** DETROITMI.GOV/DEPARTMENTS/DETROIT-HEALTH-DEPARTMENT
- **RUTH ELLIS CENTER:** RUTHELLISCENTER.ORG
- **DETROIT PHOENIX CENTER:** DETROITPHOENIXCENTER.ORG
- **HOMELESS ACTION NETWORK OF DETROIT**: HANDETROIT.ORG
- **MICHIGAN OVERDOSE PREVENTION COALITION:** MIOVERDOSEPREVENTION.COM
- **NATIONAL HARM REDUCTION COALITION:** HARMREDUCTION.ORG

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HOMELESS ACTION NETWORK OF DETROIT