



MEETING DIVERSE NEEDS IN REMOTE BORDER COMMUNITITES

Cochise Harm Reduction (CHR) serves people of Cochise County, Arizona located in the Southeast corner of the state along the U.S.-Mexico border.

CHR operates mobile harm reduction units that offer scheduled visits across several Cochise County communities. Staff with lived expertise provide harm reduction and other supplies, education and legal advocacy.

Bringing a passion for learning how to collect and use data to improve their services and the lives of those they serve, CHR staff piloted 19 indicators, two of which focused on evaluating service accessibility among community members.

The team developed and administered a survey during routine mobile routes over eight weeks, collecting useful data from 226 respondents.

USING OMM INDICATORS TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND PROGRAM REACH



DETERMINING NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS

Cochise Harm Reduction developed [point-in-time survey](#) questions from two overdose indicators they were piloting:

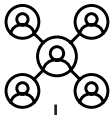
- [Barriers to receiving services](#)
- [Participants who receive needed services](#)

To identify common barriers to care, CHR created a survey question that listed 15 possible barriers. Participants were asked to check all that they have experienced and to write in any additional barriers that were not listed.

To understand what services were being utilized by participants, CHR created a second question that listed 15 available services. Participants rated each service as “I need,” or “I have,” or “I don’t need.”

When they analyzed the results, CHR was able to identify gaps in services and opportunities to improve.

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ADAPTING AND EXPANDING SERVICES

After analyzing survey results, CHR identified opportunities to adapt their services to better meet the needs of program participants. The changes they made include:

- Increase service frequency and coverage, including additional peer support services
- Increase community visibility and communication about available services through community events, workshops and media appearances
- Expand the types of supplies they offer to meet specific needs of their clients such as sanitary, hygiene and camping supplies

CHR also discovered that respondents in certain zip codes reported some of the greatest needs and barriers to care, such as transportation, housing, phones and knowledge of available resources. These observations suggested a need for more tailored services along specific mobile routes to address these unique barriers.



BUILDING GREATER PARTNERSHIPS

Further analysis revealed that people who access CHR services had many nonmedical needs such as reliable transportation, secure housing and employment.

This insight emphasized a need for improved coordination across agencies to address these underlying factors. CHR shared the findings with a local community coalition to help mobilize a coordinated response to addressing issues highlighted by program participants—especially issues beyond the capacity of CHR, such as transportation needs and access to stable housing.



MEASURABLE AND LASTING IMPACT

In 2024, CHR staff, using survey results and other community data, applied for and received additional grants to expand their services. With this funding, CHR implemented many program and service improvements both internally and in collaboration with community and regional organizations. **Since 2023**, CHR:

- **Increased service area** from 16 to 18 zip codes
- **Distributed 12,102 more meals**
- **More than doubled referrals** to substance use disorder treatment programs from 77 to 189
- **Increased referrals** to other agencies from 475 to 835
- **Hosted the Arizona Harm Reduction Coalition's first convening** and an Overdose Awareness Day event

As CHR achieves milestones and secures funding to expand the program, using OMM indicators helps strengthen their efforts to better serve their participants.



THE POWER IN COMMUNITY

“We believe all humans deserve access to food, housing and medical supplies to reduce the harms of drug use [through] community care and purpose.”

—Lu Funk, Founder and Executive Director