Needle Exchange in Louisville: One Answer for a Growing Epidemic
by Karen Krigger, MD, MEd, FAAFP, AAHIVM(S)
Director of Health Equity, HSC Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Professor, Department of Family and Geriatric Medicine, School of Medicine

One year ago, February, 2015, 30 miles from Louisville, Kentucky, The Indiana State Department declared an HIV outbreak in Scott County Indiana from Intravenous drug use with the prescription drug Opana. Eventually, 181 HIV infected persons, including 2 sex workers, would complete a newly diagnosed HIV roster, prompting Indiana’s governor to temporarily suspend an Indiana law banning needle exchange programs in Indiana. A CDC (Center for Disease) report released April, 2015 revealed 85% of those newly diagnosed were, also, Hepatitis C positive. The lifetime cost of HIV treatment for one person can be as high as $648,000, while the cost of Hepatitis C treatment can range from $84,000-$300,000 per person.

Meanwhile, across the Ohio River, The Commonwealth of Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet 2014 Overdose Fatality Report reported increased Ky. overdose fatalities, from all drug overdoses from 2013 (1,010) to (1,087) in 2014. The youngest Kentucky overdose victim was less than one year of age and the oldest fatality 80 years old. Per this report, Jefferson County was leading the state in numbers of heroin overdose cases and deaths, as well as, most overdose cases of any drug. The other top counties include Fayette, Kenton, Campbell, and Boone counties. The 2015 Kentucky legislature passed bills allowing local health departments to operate substance abuse outreach programs, including needle exchanges, in accordance with local municipality codes. On March 25, 2015 Governor Steve Beshear signed KRS218A.500 into law. The Louisville Metro Council enacted Ordinance No. 58, Series 2015 to allow Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness to set up a needle exchange program in Jefferson County. Mayor Greg Fisher signed the bill on April 23, 2015 and the Louisville Metro Board of Health unanimously voted its support on May 6, 2015.

These actions were the result of years of study indicating needle exchange sites did not increase the use of IV drugs when conducted with referrals to drug treatment, HIV and Hepatitis C testing, medical services, and support services. It has been shown needle exchange sites decrease the incidence of HIV and hepatitis C in those communities with needle exchange resources. In truth, persons availing themselves of needle exchange services were five times more likely to go into treatment. Currently, there are 204 needle exchange sites in this country operating out of 34 states. Tennessee and Ohio passed needle exchange legislation in 1999. West Virginia enacted needle exchange legislation in 2000, and Missouri and Arkansas followed in 2001.

Kentucky Senate Bill 192 approved in the 2015 session appropriated a $10 million enhancement to the state’s addiction treatment system followed by $24 million annually. Importing heroin in Ken-
tucky with intent to distribute or sell is now punishable by up to 10 years in prison. If convicted of selling between 2 grams and 100 grams of heroin, at least 5 years, or half, of the sentence must be served before parole. If caught selling more than 100 grams, prison sentences could be up to 20 years. Kentucky Senate Bill 192 increased the availability of naloxone, the drug that reverses the effects of heroin in overdose. Additionally, under the “Good Samaritan” provision of the senate bill 192, if you initiate help for a person in an overdose state, you cannot be prosecuted.

In addition, to decreasing the incidence of HIV and Hepatitis C amongst IV drug users, their sexual partners, and unborn children, needle exchange programs reduce the number of contaminated needles in streets, neighborhoods, and playgrounds. Improperly disposed of needles are a risk to community waste haulers, recycling plant workers, janitors, housekeepers, and sewage treatment workers. Jefferson county heroin problems are in every segment of our geographic and economic communities, including the east end.

Louisville’s first needle exchange site opened June 10, 2015 at 400 E. Gray Street Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness headquarters six days a week. The site has the following hours: Monday 11am-4 pm, Tuesday 1pm-6 pm, Wednesday 1pm-6pm, Thursday 3pm – 6 pm, Friday 11am- 4pm, and Saturday 11am – 2pm. Certified chemical dependency counselors, as well as, tests for Hepatitis C and HIV are available at the site during these hours. Case management services helping clients decide the most appropriate drug abuse treatment and facilities are provided under contract by JDAC (Jefferson County Drug Abuse and Counseling Center). Free Naloxone kits and training are provided by Kentucky Harm Reduction Coalition at this site. It is not a requirement for a client to bring in needles for a one to one exchange. A 2007 study by Bluthenthal, amongst 24 needle exchange sites, demonstrated less restrictive syringe dispensation was associated with increased prevalence of adequate syringe coverage among clients. The study encouraged dispensation policies that provided sufficient syringes to meet the need.

The Gray Street site constitutes an access barrier for some clients. The first community needle exchange outreach site opened October 15, 2015 at the Lake Dreamland Fire Department 4603 Cane Run Road, in south west Jefferson County. The hours for this site are Thursday from 11am – 2pm. Free Naloxone kits and instruction are provided by Volunteers of America during the needle exchange times. More community sites are planned by our local health department. Eighteen “Community Syringe Clean Up” events have been coordinated today by Kentucky Harm Reduction, Volunteers of America, and Young People in Recovery. To report discarded syringes call 311 or 574-6520. To schedule a community training for use of Naloxone kits, contact Kentucky Harm Reduction Coalition, Russ Reed, at 502-836-9910.

As to its presence in our community, Pat Fogarty a chemical dependency counselor at the Healing Place, advised families to be alert to the following signs and symptoms of abuse:
- A loved one “sick “a lot with “flu like symptoms.” The heroin user has to use a few times a day to prevent withdrawal. The user feels and looks terrible
- Heroin user going through withdrawal will have very dilated pupils, when they are using their pupils become restricted and pinpoint
- The person has a lack of motivation, legal troubles, and family troubles. With heroin use, it is hard to function in a normal capacity. Additionally, the person can lose up to 22 lbs. in the first year of use, despite having a craving for sweets.
University of Louisville Chapter of SNDA hosts Whitney Young Scholars Preview to Dentistry Workshop
by Amirah Jackson, 3rd year DMD student

On November 21, 2015, the UofL Chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA) hosted 20 Whitney Young Scholars for an interactive morning of learning about the field of dentistry. The program annually recruits academically motivated seventh grade students in the Louisville Metro area, and over a six-year period prepares them for high school graduation and successful transition into college. Eligible students must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 and qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. The ultimate goals are academic achievement and college graduation.

It was our pleasure to have these amazing scholars listen to dental students give a description of their experiences leading to dental school, and the scholars seemed surprised to hear the variety of backgrounds. We also visited the DMD clinics and taught the scholars oral hygiene instructions, using disclosing tablets for scholars to evaluate their brushing and flossing. A few may have been embarrassed by the amount of plaque revealed on their teeth, but they said the experience helped them learn how to take better care of their oral health.

The students were led on a tour of the School of Dentistry by our faculty advisor, Dr. Sherry Babbage. The tour ended at the simulation clinic where their next hands-on activity began. The scholars were extremely excited to use hand-pieces to prepare buccal pits and a Class I on #19 and #30. Many of the students remarked that it was challenging, but fun. Some mentioned that “they never knew what their dentist actually did to their teeth with the drill, so it was cool to see and do the procedure to fix a cavity.” Scholars were happy to take the dentoform teeth home to show family and friends! Each scholar received 30—45 minutes to work on the prep, and had one-on-one instruction by a dental student. This provided the opportunity to bond with the scholars and encourage them to pursue their educational, professional, and personal goals.

The workshop ended with a Q&A session in which the scholars were very active. The scholars had numerous questions, such as the cost of dental education, why we wanted to be dentists, networking advice, and application advice. This experiences was also positive for our SNDA members and non-SNDA volunteers, which was an additional bonus for our organization. All of our volunteers were awesome! Thanks to SNDA Members Aaron Brown, Kamani Meriwether, and Dr. Sherry Babbage for organizing a great community service event!
University of Louisville medical students in the Distinction in Global Health (DIGH) track are putting their passion to work for refugees resettling in Kentucky and they are inviting the community to join their effort.

Third-year UofL medical students Allison Lyle and MeNore Lake are spearheading the My New Kentucky Home: Donation Drive to collect clothing and household items for refugees arriving in Kentucky. The donations will be distributed directly to individuals in need by Migration & Refugee Services, a department of Catholic Charities of Louisville, Inc., which assists refugees in the Louisville area. The Kentucky Office for Refugees, also a department of Catholic Charities, reports that about 1,250 refugees arrived in Louisville in 2015 from 23 countries, and expects that many or more in 2016.

It all started late last fall when Lyle and her husband were cleaning out their apartment. Lyle decided she would like to get the unneeded clothing and household items to someone who could use them.

“This was around the same time as the attacks in Paris and the unfortunate discourse around Syrian refugees not being wanted,” Lyle said. “I thought we could do a med-school wide outreach program to show this demographic some extra kindness.”

As a member of the Distinction in Global Health track in the UofL School of Medicine, Lyle is particularly concerned with the needs of refugees. She brainstormed with Lake, a medical school classmate and fellow DIGH track member, and they began collecting clothing and household items for donation.

“We both recognize and respect the role of Louisville as a new home to refugees. I see the My New Kentucky Home: Donation Drive as an excellent initiative for our school to recognize and show a sense of community to refugees in Louisville,” Lake said.

The Distinction in Global Health track teaches medical students with interests in global health how to approach the literature and conduct scholarly projects in this field.

“This project, which was totally student-initiated, is in addition to all the work they are doing in school and in the track. It has now turned into a project to help stock up the warehouses around Louisville so that we are more prepared, as a city, to meet the needs of the refugees we are expecting,” said Bethany Hodge, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Global Education Office of the UofL School of medicine and the DIGH program.

The group encourages the HSC community to donate household items and winter clothing for new arrivals in Louisville. They are collecting new or gently-used items including:

- Men's, women's and children's clothing (greatest need is for winter clothes, shoes, socks, undergarments)
- Kitchen utensils, pots, pans, dish sets
- Bedding (blankets, comforters, fleece throws and sheets)
- and pillows
- Bath towels, hand towels and rags

Donations may be taken to Michael Keibler in the UofL Office of Student Affairs, “A” Building, 319 Abraham Flexner Way, Suite 210 through Friday, Jan. 29.

Items also may be dropped off at Migration Refugee Services, 2220 W. Market St. from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

To have furniture or other large items picked up, contact Chris Clements, Catholic Charities Assistant Community Resource Developer at 502-636-9263, ext. 125
Red Cross Recognizes Efforts of Nursing Students for Pillowcase Project

UofL Community Health nursing students spent the Fall 2015 semester making presentations to local elementary students about the American Red Cross (ARC) National Disaster Preparedness Program called the Pillowcase Project. The nursing students used props to tell children about disaster preparedness and instructed them on how to build their own emergency supplies kits. Community Preparedness & Resilience Manager Robert Baldwin and Louisville Area Chapter Chief Executive Officer Jennifer Adrio presented a Certificate of Appreciation Award on Dec. 18 to nursing faculty Montray Smith and her Community Health nursing students for their involvement.

Now in its fifth year, the local Pillowcase Project supports in-school and after-school curriculum helping second and third grade students learn how to prepare for and cope with emergencies. The program reaches more than 4,000 students throughout portions of Kentucky and Indiana annually.

The Pillowcase Project curriculum is structured by three core principles: Learn, Practice and Share. During a presentation by a trained program leader, children learn about hazards as well as how to prepare for emergencies, enhance coping skills, practice what they have learned and share their knowledge with friends and family. The program emphasizes the importance of developing an emergency communications plan, fire evacuation plan and emergency contact cards.

The program also teaches students how to create their own emergency supply kits by packing essential items in a pillowcase, for easy transport, during an emergency. Students have the opportunity to decorate and personalize their pillowcases during the presentation, and are encouraged to take them home to create a kit.
Public Health and Information Sciences

My Summer with the Office of Public Health Practice

by Elijah Thomas, Youth Fellow, Office of Public Health Practice & Trinidad Jackson, MS, MPH, Senior Research Associate, Office of Public Health Practice

At the Office of Public Health Practice (OPHP), we aim to practice what we preach. Much of our work is community-based, and we continuously strive to facilitate health equity and social justice through research, teaching, scholarship, and community engagement. During the summer of 2015, we had the privilege of employing a community youth who was engaged in a reciprocally vital and invaluable learning experience.

Introduction

How’s it going my brothers and sisters?! My name is Elijah Thomas, an 18 year old afro topped, all-black wearing youth who is black and proud! During the summer of 2015, I found myself getting a VERY unexpected job and meeting a ton of new people! I learned and experienced so much and honestly say I grew as a person through my internship at UL’s School of Public Health! I would like to inform you of my experience there, but first I would like to tell you how I got this gig.

How I was found

It all started at an anger youth forum that my 14 year old sister and I were forced to attend. As the forum’s name suggests, the focus was youth anger; each of the youth were allowed to discuss the triggers of their anger, and then break off into groups to come up with solutions to these triggers. The other youth at the forum had pretty similar triggers when it came to anger, ranging from: school stress, parents’ expectations, and chores. All of those triggers were understandable, but they were not my sources of anger. When it was finally my turn to discuss my triggers, I reluctantly spoke: “What makes me angry is the fact that there are racist power structures in this country specifically designed for my failure. What makes me angry is the fact that these gestapo pigs can get away with killing a brother with nothing more than a slap on the wrist. What makes me angry is that we as a people are more divided than ever. What makes me angry is...,” and then I got comfortable and wouldn’t give the mic back. After the forum, I was approached by a few “strangers” who offered me business cards, one in particular being from Monique Ingram of the UL School of Public Health’s Office of Public Health Practice. She told me to give her a call, and after months of procrastination I did, and boy, was it worth it.

My collaborators

Now during my time this summer, I worked with a wide array of people including: Trinidad Jackson, who was my supervisor/mentor; Monique Ingram who was my boss; and Dr. Monica Wendel, who was my SUPER boss. The majority of my time was spent with Trinidad who, when not challenging me to push-up contest in the spirit of public health and healthy living (lol) taught me the ways of the office. One of the most important
things he taught me was to consider how “social determinants of health” greatly influence one’s way of thinking, one’s view of themselves, and even one’s physical, mental, and social health. While not an exhaustive list, the social determinants of health are made up of: the educational system, the justice system, economic stability, and environmental factors, all of which need to be reformed, ESPECIALLY in the “Black” community.

What I did

While at work, I participated in many community forums through citywide initiatives such as Zones of Hope and the Mayor’s One Love Louisville. I also observed OPHP facilitate community research projects; however, my main responsibility was to investigate and establish links between events from the past and events in the present relating to the Black community, such as: how the slave breaking process performed by “Whites” during the early 1500s to the late 1800s was actually successful in stripping us of our identities as kings and queens, and as a result, the racist slave masters and many elitists of this country were able to paint a negative image of Blacks which we blindly follow to this day; I learned that this result impedes our ability to develop healthy racial and ethnic identities. Additionally, I investigated: the negative impact that eurocentrism and lack of cultural responsive pedagogy has in our school systems; the role that media plays in breaking down our people’s self-esteem, while giving Whites a false sense of superiority; and how the sabotaging and killing of civil rights leaders resulted in their followers turning to “crime” to get their point across. You see, history is not just a straight line; it is a string of intertwined webs, with each older web correlating with a newer one. It was my job to connect these webs and spin my own webs of solution to combat the existing webs. I spun many webs during my internship, from wanting to renovate the houses in West Louisville and create better business opportunities, to separating from this racist, classist government and starting our own nation within a nation. However the main, and arguably more plausible web I focused on was the indoctrination of “Black history” into the school’s curriculum.

What I learned

While doing research on the effects “black history” has had on people, as well recalling my own experiences with the subject, I realized how alleviating “Black history” can be for all ethnicities. You see, “Black history” is not just the absorption of African culture into one’s mental, but IT IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD! Knowledge of Black history has the power to destroy social constructs such as race and class! Black history has the power to motivate and inspire even the most broken of souls! Black history has the power to make even the most pretentious individual realize that there is no such thing as superiority, only regularity! This is why the powers that be want to keep it away from us! They want us to continue fighting amongst ourselves over trivial, non-existent rubbish while they sit back and get rich! This is why we must continue to demand that this content is necessary, and must be taught to our children! They’re the future and if we truly want things to get better in this country, we must arm our children with not just knowledge of self, but knowledge of truth! As the great Huey Newton once said, “The revolution has always been in the hands of the young. The young always inherit the revolution.” And if my studies here at OPHP have shown me anything, they have affirmed that this quote remains true.

What I do now

While my internship at OPHP has ended, I am not done with them yet. You see, we’ve recently gained funding for a special project that I am a part of. This project is the “Louisville Youth Voices against Violence Fellowship!” The project will consist of me and other youth designing different campaigns targeted toward certain marginalized groups and issues, and applying historical components to the campaign to further get our point across. We will also be aligning our efforts with other youth in order to increase our reach, and impact youth across the entire city! Yes, we’re going to shake up the world with truth,
knowledge, and straight up power! And through this effort, we will hope to save our city from the disparities and violence plaguing our communities.

Readers, thank you for your time, and I thank the School of Public Health for providing me with this opportunity!

Note: Remember my brothers and sisters...EVERYTHING STARTED FROM THE BLACK!

Elijah Thomas shares his summer experience with community members, government officials, UL faculty and staff, and community organization leaders.
Over 650 Students Attend 10th Annual Patricia Allen Cultural Competency Day
by Katie Leslie, PhD
Program Director

On November 10, students from UofL Schools of Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Public Health and Kent School of Social Work, as well as the Sullivan University College of Pharmacy and nurses with Passport Health Plan participated in the 10th Annual Patricia Allen Cultural Competency Day. The event was held at the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage (KCAAH), located in the Russell neighborhood in West Louisville.

Vivian Lasley-Bibbs, acting director for the Office of Health Equity in the Kentucky Department for Public Health, opened the event with a keynote address on the increasing racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in the American population. She emphasized the need for healthcare practitioners to understand the socio-cultural background of their patients in order to deliver high quality healthcare. This year’s theme was “Health Equity through Interprofessional Practice” as the content and structure of the day was revamped to foster discussion and learning among the multiple health disciplines represented. Students were assigned to 69 interprofessional teams comprised of 9-10 members. All teams rotated through four 75-minute breakout sessions (LGBT Health, Poverty and Accessing Health Care, Cultural Barriers in Health Care, and Immigrant/Refugee Health). Each breakout session included a personal story of accessing healthcare from a member of the respective community, a brief systems lecture exploring the social determinants of health and systemic barriers as they relate to health in this community, examples of resources and strategies to address health disparities in these populations, and a group case study activity. Students were asked to collaboratively discuss the case, record how each health profession would provide care and support to the individuals and families, and identify strategies for interprofessional teamwork to achieve optimal patient/client care.

The Health Sciences Center Office of Diversity and Inclusion would like to thank the faculty and staff who served as members of the planning committee as well as the many facilitators and volunteers who made the day possible.

The 2015 Patricia Allen Cultural Competency Day was funded in part by Passport Health Plan, Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, University of Louisville Commission on Diversity and Racial Equality (CODRE), University of Louisville Office of Undergraduate Medical Education, and the University of Louisville LGBT Center.
Upcoming Diversity Events & Announcements

- LGBT Health and Wellness Certificate Series
  *HIV Epidemiology (Public Health Focused)*
  Tuesday, February 2, 2:30 –3:30pm
  Location: SPHIS Room 001

- 2016 Human Trafficking Conference
  Tuesday, February 2, 5:00 –9:00pm
  Location: Student Activities Center, Belknap Campus
  More Information: [here](#)

- National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
  Sunday, February 7
  Learn more [here](#)

- HSC Women’s Post Doc Lunch
  Friday, February 12, 12:00—1:00pm
  Location: CTR Building, Room 123
  More Information: [here](#)
  RSVP to Luisa Trujillo by February 3rd

The Department of Family and Geriatric Medicine Seeking Nominations for
2016 Optimal Aging Award

Do you know an individual who is aging "optimally?" If you do, please nominate them for this award. Nominees must be 85 years of age or older, and should exemplify someone who is making the most of whatever their later years bring and continuing to love life with each coming year. This event began in 2011 and the winners have been honored at the annual Optimal Aging Luncheon, traditionally held in the fall. In 2012 nominations were expanded to two separate categories, individuals and couples.

This year nominations will be taken October 2015 through January 2016. The Gold Standard Award for Optimal Aging 2016 will be held on Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at The Crowne Plaza. Nominations are currently open and must be received no later than midnight on February 1, 2016, for the nominee to be considered.

You may submit an online nomination [here](#) or call **(502) 852-8953** for assistance. Nominees do not have to be from your organization, but may be your family or friends. The event is free to the nominee and one guest. We look forward to your participation!

---

**43rd DR. JOSEPH H. MCMILLAN NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE BLACK FAMILY IN AMERICA**

*The Dimensions of the Black Family in the 21st Century*

February 26-27, 2016