



**NKYHEALTH**  
NORTHERN KENTUCKY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



# Stopping the Spread of Infectious Diseases

## Syringe Access Exchange Programs



# Situation Analysis



# Heroin Use in NKY

In NKY the increase in IV drug use (particularly heroin) has led to an increase in:

- Drug overdoses and untimely deaths
- Emergency room visits and hospitalizations
- Babies born to women with drug addiction
- Arrests and incarceration, drug possession, trafficking and other criminal activity
- Impact on businesses and economic development
- Communicable diseases (e.g. hepatitis C)



# Business Growth and Attracting New Businesses



## Dying To Be Free

There's A Treatment For Heroin Addiction That Actually Works.  
Why Aren't We Using It?

By Jason Cherkis  
JANUARY 28, 2015



THE  
HUFFINGTON  
POST

## The New York Times

### *Costly to Treat, Hepatitis C Gains Quietly in U.S.*

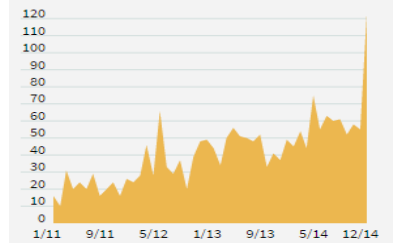
By ABBY GOODNOUGH JULY 23, 2015

EDGEWOOD, Ky. — Zach Wayman says he first contracted [hepatitis C](#) several years ago by sharing needles with other heroin addicts.



### NORTHERN KENTUCKY HIT HARD BY HEROIN OVERDOSES

Between 2011 and 2014, heroin overdoses at five Kentucky emergency rooms outside of Cincinnati — Covington, Ft. Thomas, Edgewood, Florence and Grant County — increased by 669 percent.



Source: St. Elizabeth Healthcare





# Public Health in Northern Kentucky



The Northern Kentucky Health Department is the public agency charged with performing mandated public health services and addressing priority community health needs.

We prevent disease, promote wellness and protect against health threats.



# Communicable Disease Control

In KRS 211.180, health departments under the authority of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services:

“...perform the duties of detection, prevention, and control of communicable diseases...”



# IV Drug Use and Disease

Why is public health concerned about IV drug use?

- Sharing needles, syringes, and other drug equipment transmits diseases - hepatitis C, hepatitis B, and HIV
- Contaminated needles, syringes, and other drug equipment get discarded in public places - puts the public and first responders at risk for diseases from accidental needle sticks





# Diseases Associated with IV Drug Use



- **Hepatitis C** – viral infection of the liver that can proceed to liver failure and death if untreated. Medication costs to treat=\$84,000.
  - In 2014, KY's Medicaid program spent more than \$50 million to treat 800 people infected with hepatitis C.
- **HIV** –chronic disease with a lifetime cost of \$300,000 to treat.
- **Hepatitis B** – viral infection of the liver that can become a lifelong infection; can be prevented with vaccination.



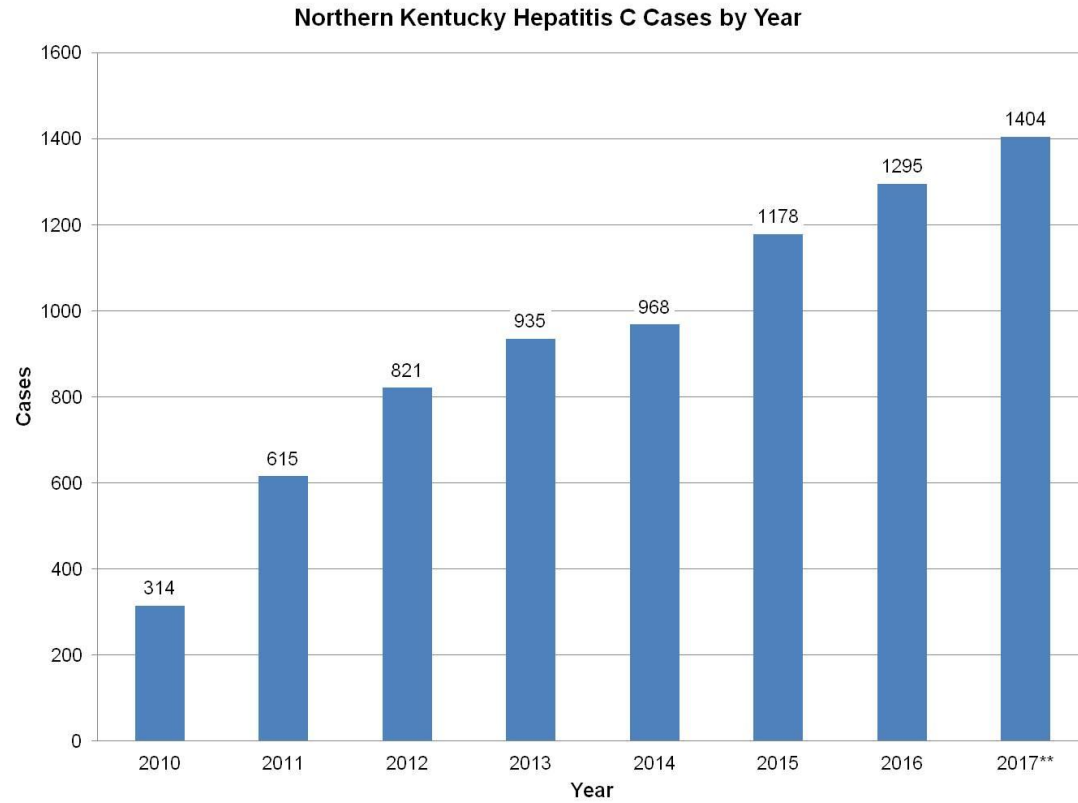
# Disease Data in NKY

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES SPREAD BY IV DRUG USE (2016)\*\*

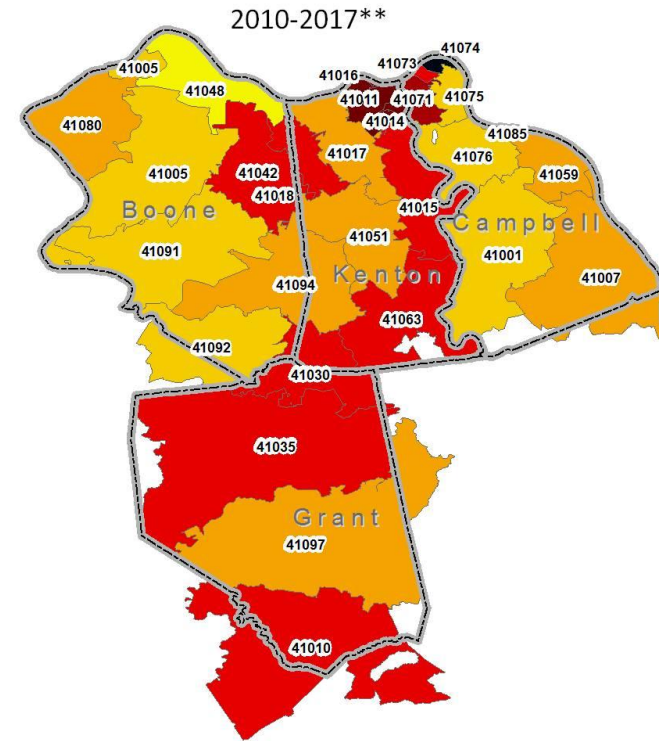
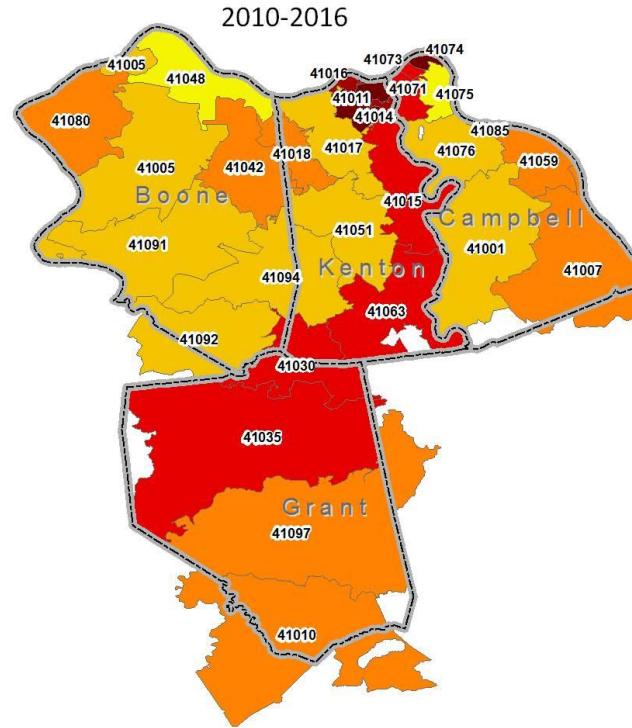
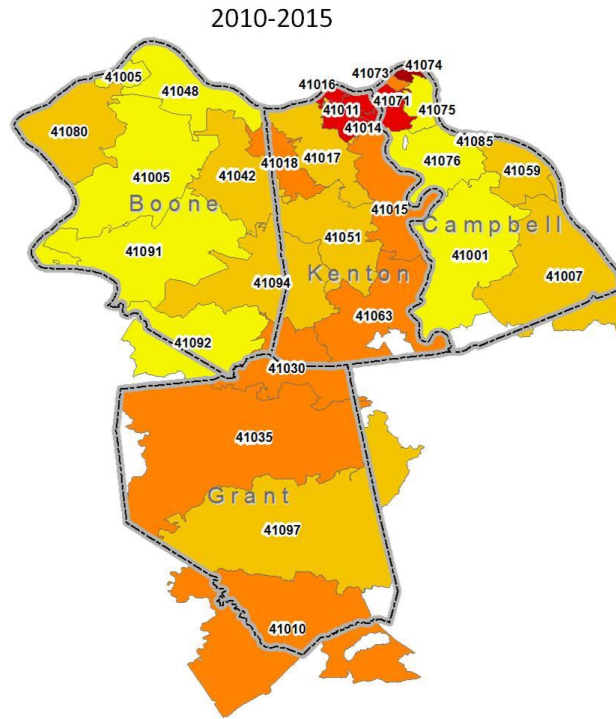
| Diagnosis  | Boone County | Campbell County | Grant County | Kenton County | NKY *     |
|--|--------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| Acute hepatitis B  | Fewer than 5 | Fewer than 5    | Fewer than 5 | 19            | 27 (X)    |
| Acute hepatitis C  | 5            | 10              | Fewer than 5 | 11            | 27 (X)    |
| Non-acute hepatitis B  | 36           | 30              | 19           | 74            | 159(X)    |
| Non-acute hepatitis C  | 311          | 289             | 83           | 599           | 1,282 (X) |
| HIV cumulative from 1982 to June 30, 2016, living and deceased | 134          | 169             | 34           | 444           | 781       |



# Hepatitis C in N KY



# Hepatitis C in NKY



# Scott County, Indiana

Outbreak of Recent HIV and HCV Infections among Persons Who Inject Drugs



Distributed via the CDC Health Alert Network  
April 24, 2015, 11:00 ET (11:00 AM ET)  
CDCHAN-00377

This is an official  
**CDC HEALTH ADVISORY**

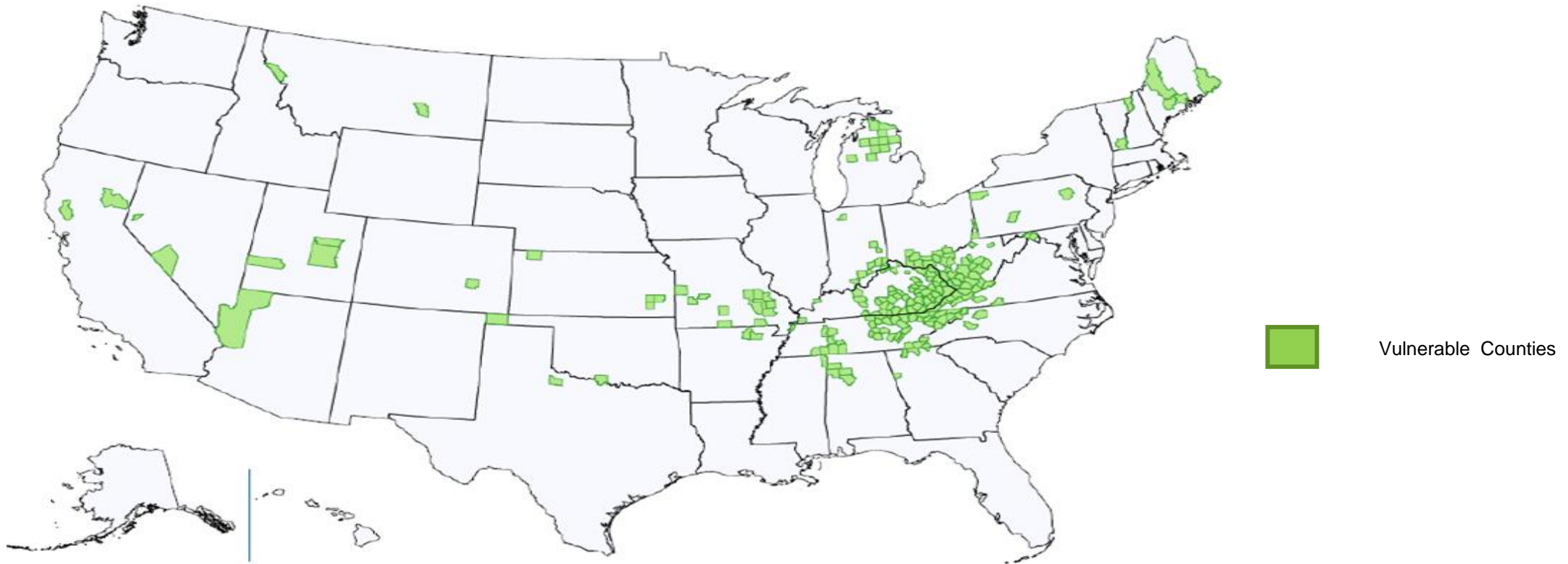
*"I don't think there's anything that makes Scott County, Indiana, different from any other rural county in America. It just happened to be the first."*

Jennifer Walthall  
Indiana Deputy Health  
Commissioner



# CDC Map of HIV Vulnerable Counties

## Sept. 23, 2015



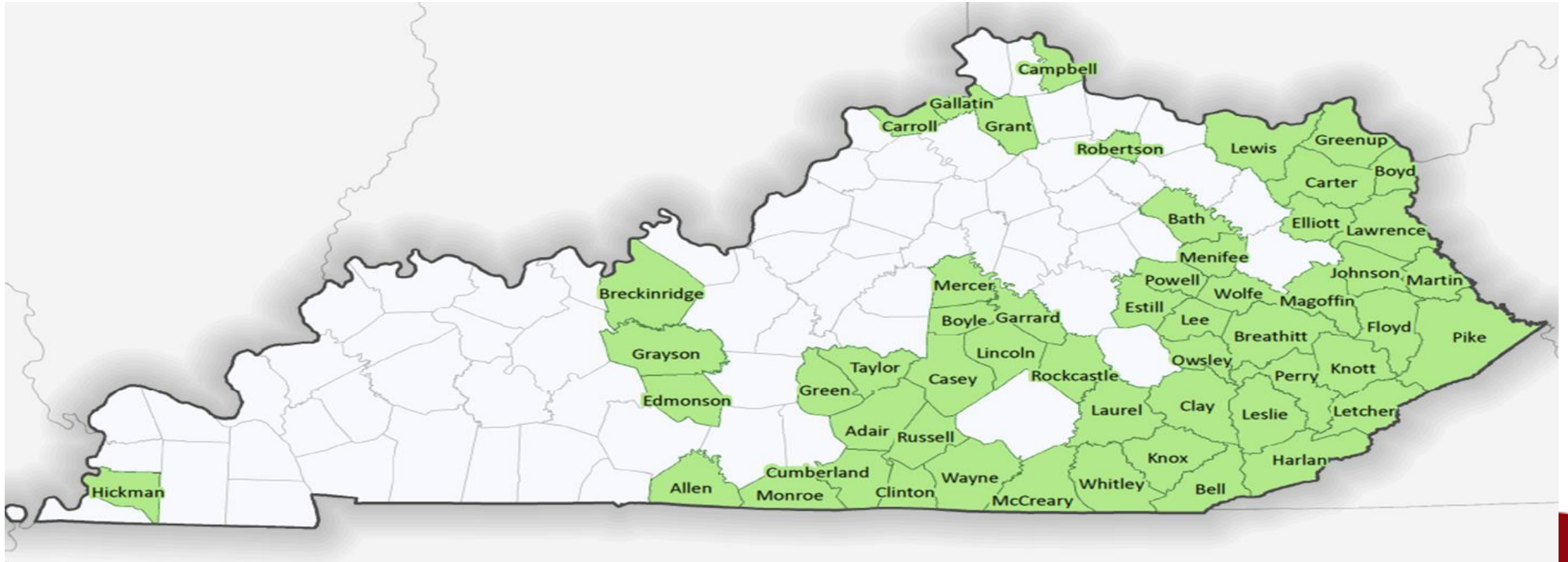
Specific concerns regarding Kentucky Counties:

1. Dense drug user networks similar to Scott County, Indiana
2. Lack of syringe exchange programs



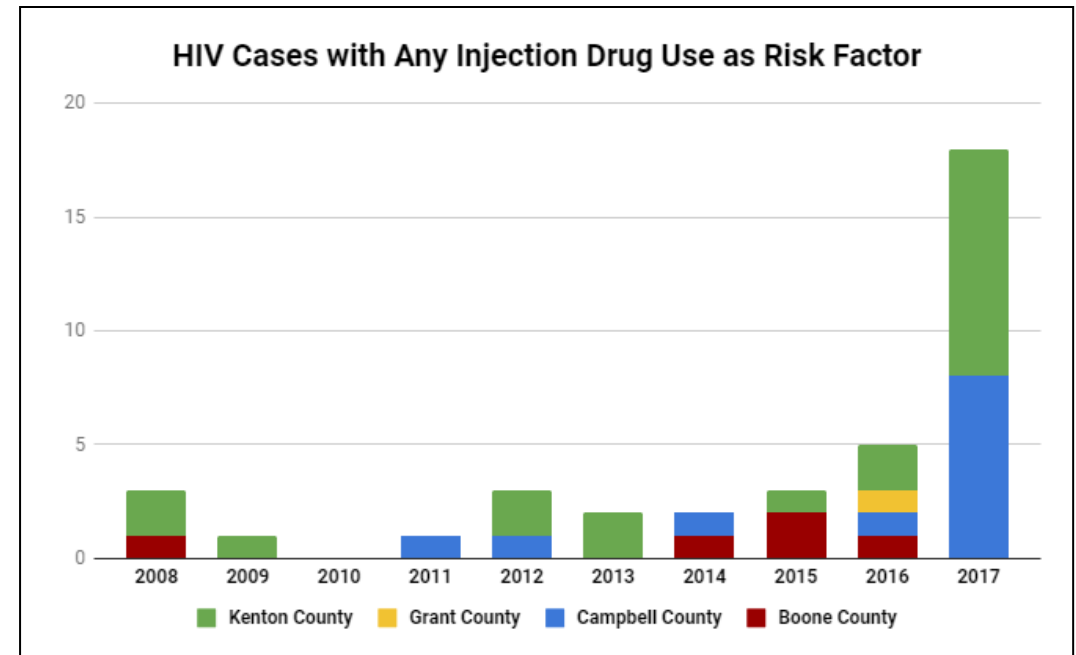


# CDC Map of HIV Vulnerable Counties



# HIV Cluster Investigation

- Total number of cases increased: 37 new cases, compared to 25 cases in 2016 and 34 cases in 2015.
- Risk factor of injection drug use up dramatically: **In 2017, a total of 18 people reported injection drug use among risk factors, compared to five in 2016.**
- Concentrated in Campbell and Kenton Counties.



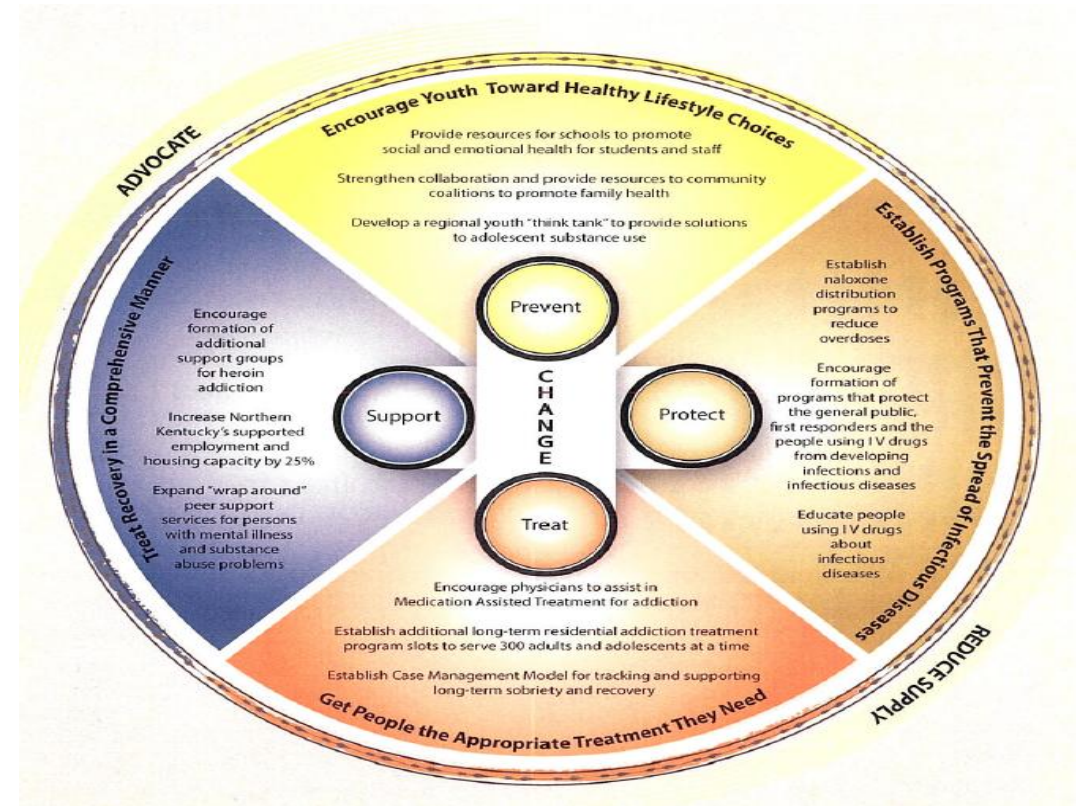
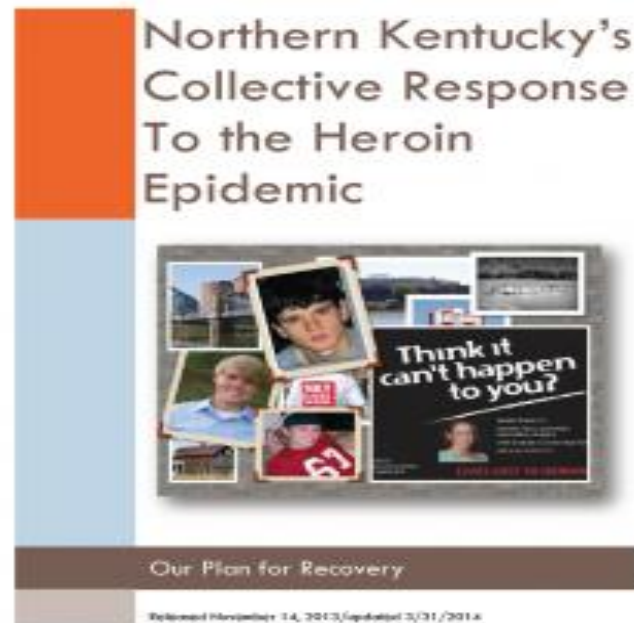
# SB 192-Kentucky's Heroin Law

General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky passed Senate Bill 192 in the 2015 Regular Session which amends KRS 218A.500, adding sections (5) (a) – (c) which enables:

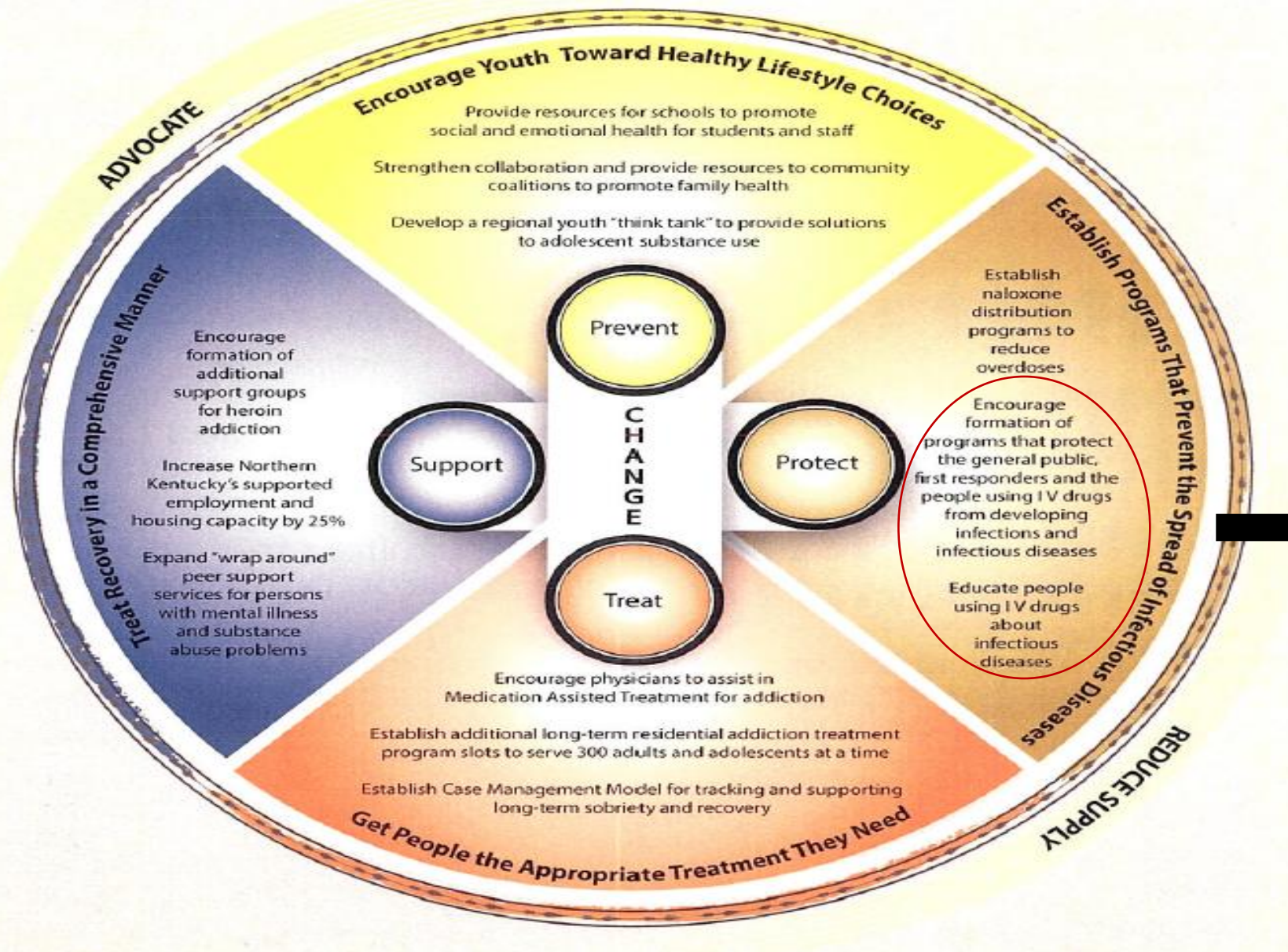
*“local health departments to operate a substance abuse treatment outreach program which allows participants to exchange hypodermic needles and syringes with the consent of the local board of health and the legislative body of the city and county in which the program would operate.”*



# NKY Heroin Impact Response Task Force







Syringe  
Access  
Exchange  
Program-  
One aspect  
of larger  
response



# Syringe Access Exchange Programs





# What is a Syringe Access Exchange Program (SAEP)?

- A comprehensive public health program to reduce the spread of communicable diseases like Hepatitis C and B and HIV in a community.
- Exchanges sterile syringes, needles, and clean injection equipment for contaminated equipment.
- Properly disposes of contaminated equipment. (gets these needles out of public places, decreases likelihood of accidental needlesticks with dirty needles)

*But there is a lot more involved...*



# What is a SAEP?

RECOVERY



Health care access:

- Testing for HIV, hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy
- Vaccinations (e.g. Hepatitis A & B)
- Naloxone (overdose prevention)
- Enrollment in health care coverage
- Counseling and education – **connect to treatment**
- Other health department services and referrals to other health care providers



# Misconceptions and Myths

## Syringe Access Exchange Programs:

- Do NOT encourage individuals to begin using drugs.
- Do NOT increase drug use among existing users.
- Do NOT increase crime in neighborhoods in which such a program operates.

Source: The Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR), Public Safety, Law Enforcement, and Syringe Exchange Fact Sheet, May 2013.  
[http://www.amfar.org/uploadedFiles/\\_amfarorg/Articles/On\\_The\\_Hill/2013/fact%20sheet%20Syringe%20Exchange%20031413.pdf](http://www.amfar.org/uploadedFiles/_amfarorg/Articles/On_The_Hill/2013/fact%20sheet%20Syringe%20Exchange%20031413.pdf)



# Do SAEP's Work?

# YES

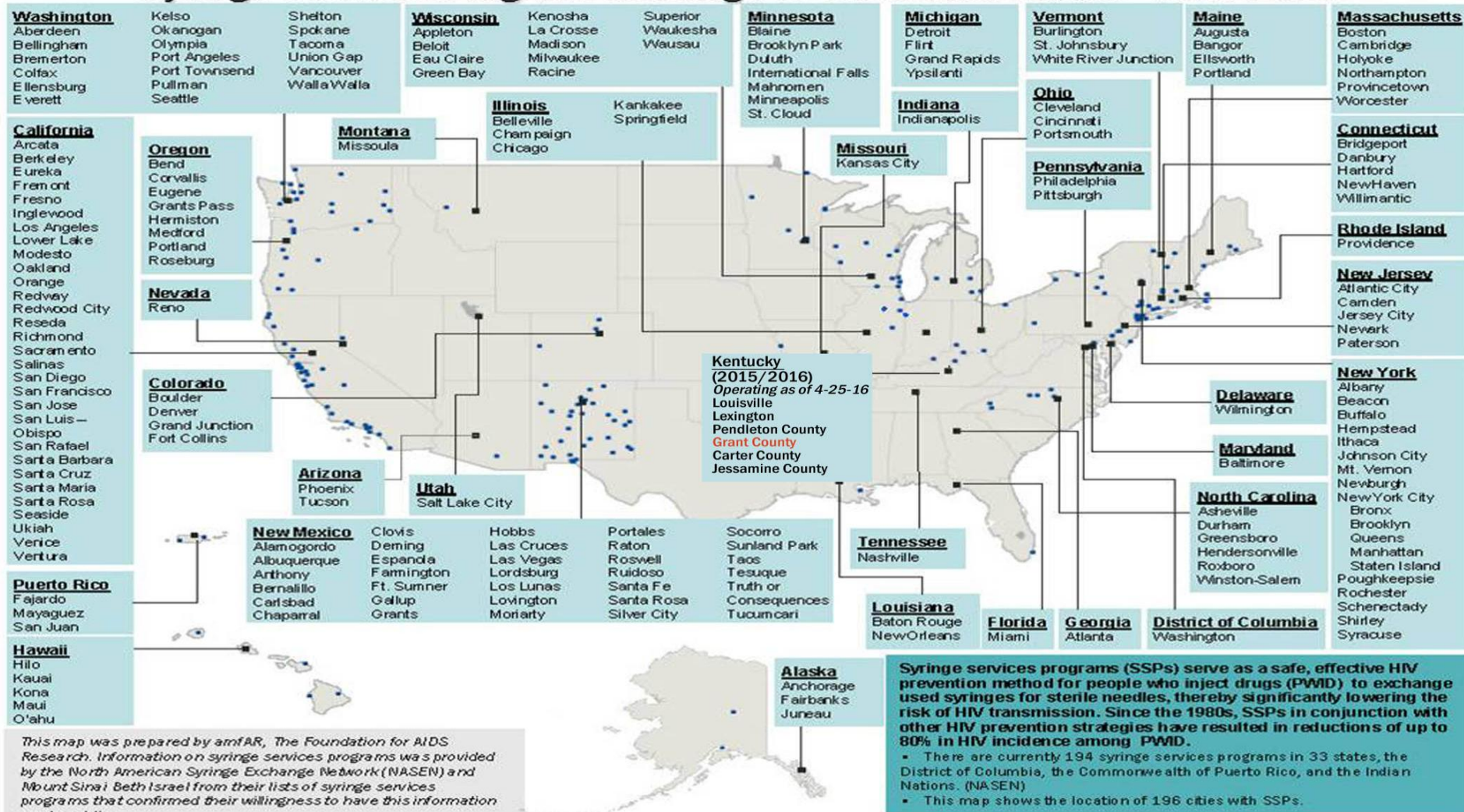


# Benefits of SAEP's

- Reduces HIV and hepatitis transmission among injection drug users
- Advances public safety including the safety of law enforcement officials and first responders
- Serve as an important link to mental health and addiction treatment services and other health care services
- Cost effective compared to treating HIV and hepatitis C



# Syringe Services Program Coverage in the United States - June 2014





# Progress in Portsmouth, Ohio



## Hepatitis C Rates

- 2014 - 437 cases
- 2015 - 261 cases

**40% decrease**

"It's a good sign, but it's too early to say that it's a great sign," Roberts said. "But what we do know is that the people who participate in our program are not sharing their needles with other people so we're containing that spread, which is very important."



# Progress Locally

Grant County – Operational on March 16, 2016; data through March 2018

- 322 unduplicated participants
- 163 referrals to addiction treatment
- 458 Naloxone kits distributed to clients
- 295 Naloxone kits distributed to community members
- 129 tests provided for HIV, hepatitis C, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy



# Status of the Program

## Support

- St. Elizabeth Healthcare
- NKY Chamber of Commerce
- NKY Office of Drug Control Policy
- N KY Agency for Substance Abuse Policy
- NKY Heroin Impact Response Task Force
- NKY Medical Society
- NKY People Advocating Recovery
- City of Independence
- City of Park Hills
- City Ft. Mitchell
- Campbell Leadership Action Group

## Funding

- Private foundation funding
- State funds
  - State grants  
(Naloxone distribution)
- Federal funds (most services except sterile needles and syringes)
- Medicaid billing for certain services (vaccination, confirmatory testing)



# Status of the Program

| County       | Board of Health Approval (Date)                 | County Approval (Date)                           | City Approval (Date)                      | Operation                                      |
|--------------|---|--|---|--|
| Boone        | NKY District Board of Health (June 2015)        |  |   |  |
| Campbell     | NKY District Board of Health (June 2015)        | Campbell County Fiscal Court (May 2016)          | Newport (February 2018)                   | Planning underway for operation in summer 2018 |
| <b>Grant</b> | <b>NKY District Board of Health (June 2015)</b> | <b>Grant County Fiscal Court (February 2016)</b> | <b>City of Williamstown (August 2015)</b> | <b>Began March 2016</b>                        |
| Kenton       | NKY District Board of Health (June 2015)        | Kenton County Fiscal Court (March 2016)          | City of Covington (March 2016)            | Planning underway for operation in summer2018  |



# Questions

