



apss

*aids programs  
south saskatchewan*

**2017 - 2018 Annual Report**

# AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan

## Mission

Provide relevant and accessible services and programs, and foster connections for individuals families and communities affected by, living with or at risk of HIV/AIDS/HCV

## Vision

To be a trusted leader in HIV/AIDS, Education, prevention, support and care

## Values

We are **respectful** — recognizing the worth and dignity of each person

We are **confidential** —respecting each individual's right to anonymity

We are **accountable** – transparent in all interactions

We treat people with **integrity** — acting in an honest and ethical manner, doing what we say we will do and following through on commitments

We respond to people with **compassion** — we treat everyone with empathy, gentleness, acceptance and kindness

We strive for **excellence** — we provide reliable, quality service as informed by the people we interact with and through self-reflection

# AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan

## Board of Directors

Our board of directors bring dedication and specialized knowledge to their support of this agency.

### Board Chair

Dominik Werber

### Vice Chair

Laurie Sampson

### Treasurer

Jennifer Martuo

### Secretary

Sydney Bolt

### Director

Debbie Rodger

### Director

Kirk Nordick

### Director

Pauline Streete

## Staff

Our passionate and team oriented staff are the key to providing optimum care and support

### Executive Director

Stephanie Milla

### Office Administrator

Shiny Varghese

### Client Care Coordinator

Morag Hurn

### Program Coordinator

Sophie Pitman

### Needle Exchange Coordinator

Lynette Flamont

### Education & Information Specialist

Vidya Dhar Reddy

### Education Outreach Coordinator

Anna Roettger

### At Risk Support Group

Elder Norma-Jean Byrd

Facilitator Danita Wahpoosewyan

## Message from the Board Chair

For over 33 years now, AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan (APSS) has proudly been serving its communities, people living with HIV and/or Hepatitis C, and those who are most at risk through its valuable and much needed support and services. While HIV/HepC treatments have thankfully come a long way since the early days of our organization, and so HIV today must no longer be a death sentence, Saskatchewan sadly remains the leader for the highest HIV rates in Canada therefore making APSS's important work all the more urgent and necessary.

I am very pleased with this year's Annual Report as it highlights the hard work and dedication of our staff and Executive Director to APSS' Vision, Mission, and Values.

In light of recent austerity budgets by the provincial government, the board focused its attention this past year on stabilizing the organizations finances so that the longevity of our wonderful organization is guaranteed. The board also worked on raising the organization's public profile by participating in many community events and continued its work to review the organization's policies and to update them.

At times when APSS is being asked to do more for less it is important to thank our tremendous staff who repeatedly strive to ensure that our clients are supported and cared for, our communities are educated and comforted and that no one is left behind. It would be impossible for APSS to fulfill its mandate without our dedicated volunteers – a special thank you to our students from a variety of post secondary programs in Regina, who are all committed individuals and who are never thanked enough for their tireless work.

Finally, I would like to thank the current members of the APSS board of directors who are continuing on with their service in the upcoming year. On behalf of the board I would like to thank our secretary Syd Bolt for his 4 years of service on APSS's board. Also, a huge thank-you goes to our vice-chair Laurie Sampson for all her time and dedication to the organization. We wish both of them only the very best in all their future endeavors!

In closing, I would like to welcome all new volunteers, community partners, and board members to whom I look forward to working with over the next few months!

— *Dominik Werber*

## Message from the Executive Director

Over the last year, guided by the strategic plan set in 2018, APSS has experienced many positive changes.

**Raising the Profile of APSS:** In 2017-18 APSS became actively engaged in a variety of social media channels; sharing relevant and appropriate HIV/HCV information. In addition to our engagement with the social media family, APSS launched a new look to the website which not only improved how our clients experienced and accessed our information but also the general public. In the last year we have also worked to increase our involvement in the communities of all priority populations by having an active role in special events, celebrations and allocating time and space to ensure that our priority groups felt heard and supported by the organization.

**Increased Programming:** Since 2016, it was my goal to secure financial stability and ensure the longevity of the organization. The success in securing funding also ensured our ability to increase APSS programming for years to come. As our organizational name suggests, it is our mandate and responsibility to expand our services not only in North Central but in all parts of Southern Saskatchewan, which we were able to achieve through intensive efforts in the Education & Outreach programs that travelled across Saskatchewan to provide, awareness, support and education.

**Achieving financial sustainability:** In previous years, APSS continued to experience large deficits; the pressure was on to increase program output while reducing costs and most importantly improving fiscal management. In 2018, a proposed balanced budget was put forward; while unexpected moving expenses set us slightly off mark, we are proud to have stuck very closely to a healthy balanced budget. As the organization continues to enhance programs, APSS is committed to the proposed balanced budget for the coming year while maintaining and even increasing program outputs.

**Improving Governance:** This year began with a full review of the bylaws and policies and have begun the process of properly updating aligning these policies to Information Services Corporation in Saskatchewan. In addition committees were set among the board, with specific responsibilities to improve board service to the organization.

On behalf of APSS, **Thank you!**

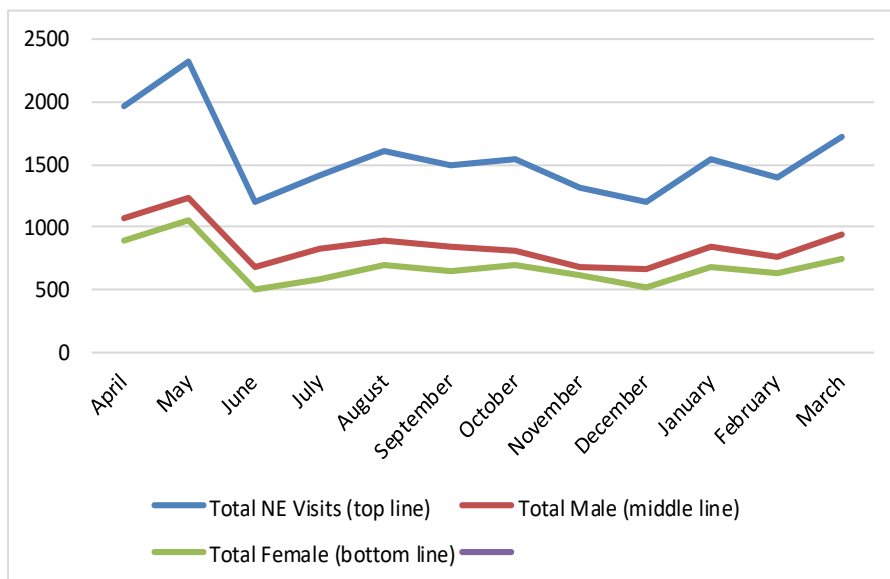
To a world without HIV/AIDS,

—*Stephanie Milla*

# Queen City Exchange

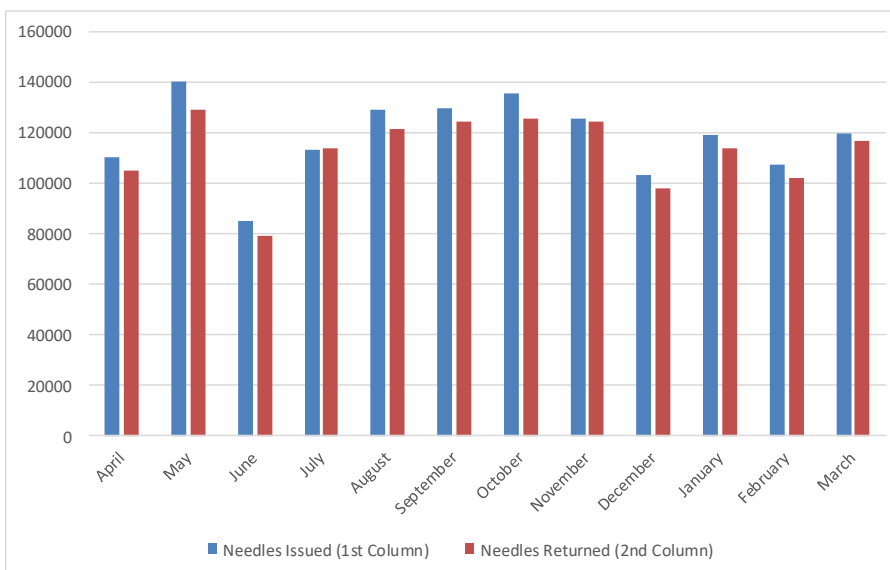
AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan (APSS), in partnership with Saskatchewan Health Authority, operates one of the busiest Needle Exchange Programs (NEP) in the province. Monday through Friday from 9am – 4:30pm and on Saturdays from 10am – 4:30pm. Clients and guests may be referred to Methadone and Detox for addiction treatment, safe houses, to the Regina & District Food Bank, or to Carmichael Outreach for housing help. Our Needle Exchange Coordinator who is also an addictions counsellor is available daily. We also have peer supports onsite to speak to anyone HIV+ or not twice a month. The NEP distributes clean needles, ties, spoons, water, alcohol swabs, condoms and provides information about harm reduction, HIV and Hepatitis C prevention and resources. We also collect used or discarded needles from the community and return them to the office for a safe disposal.

In 2017/2018, we conducted 2,655 information/intervention conversation sessions on topics such as harm reduction, safe sex, testing, and treatment in the Needle Exchange. These sessions lead to an increase in referrals to testing and treatment and increased knowledge



**Number of Visits**

Female: 8,237  
 Male: 10,218  
 Other: 246



**Needles Distributed**

Needles In: 1,354,939  
 Needles Out: 1,418,281  
 Return Rate: 95.5%

Condoms: 21,157

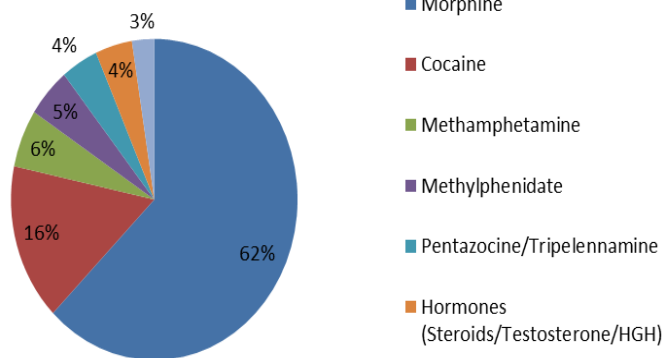
# Monthly IDU Survey

In 2017/2018, we surveyed Needle Exchange clients for 3 weeks every month. We asked an anonymous question to 120 different people and then took down their answer and their Needle Exchange ID. This was done to ensure accuracy of results and evade duplicated data. At the end of the three weeks, all data was collected and separated by gender, age, ethnicity, and location. (Graphs were made depending on relevance).

People were very open with their answers, even to the point of going into detail and telling our staff their story. By providing a safe space, being anonymous and having consistent staff, needle exchange clients are more likely to trust us.

The responses from our Needle Exchange clients have been informative which have helped in relationship building as well as enhance our programs to meet the needs of our clients. We will take this data as a needs assessment and turn what we have learned into where we need to focus. This could include: increased youth education on injection drug use, working with our NEP clients in a way they will understand, and creating awareness events for the public.

## What Is Your Drug of Choice When Using Needles?



The questions we asked were as followed:

January- Have you been tested for HIV?

February- Do you use protection?

March- What do you use needles for? (What drug?)

April- How often do you use a day?

May- What was your first drug? (Alcohol/Nicotine/Marijuana/Other)

June- Have you ever been to treatment?

July- When did you start using?

August- Why did you start using?

September- Do people know you use?

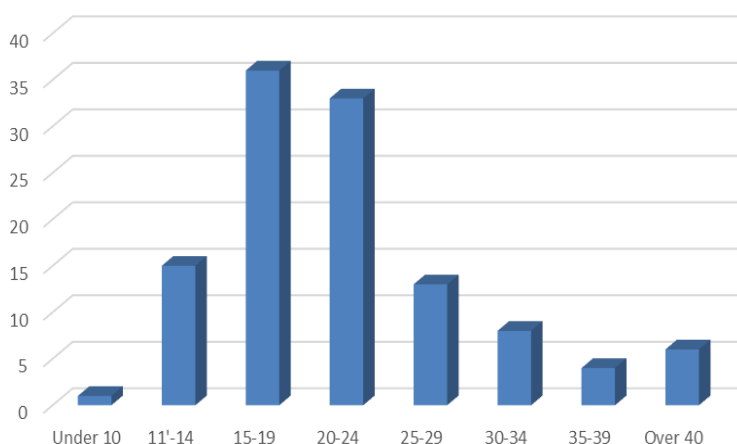
October- Have you ever overdosed?

November- Have you ever been refused services or felt stigmatized because of your use?

December- Have you been tested for HIV this year? (a repeat question to compare results from January)

(All survey results can be found on our website)

## What Age Did You Start Using Injection Drugs?

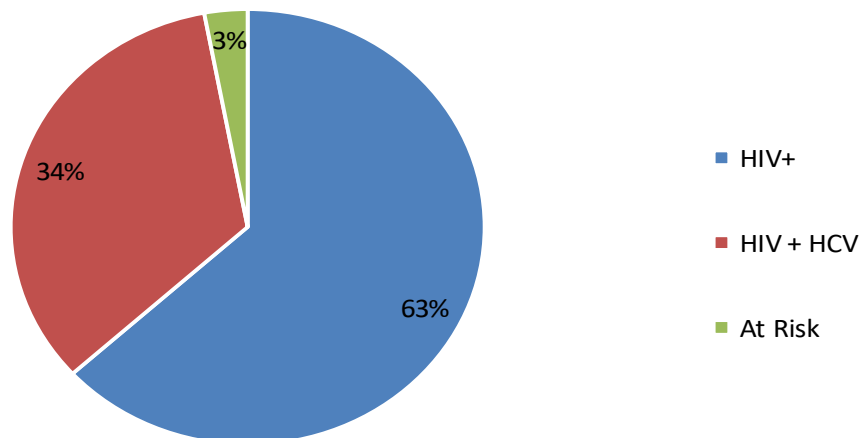


## Support Services

The goal of the Client Care Program is to assist HIV positive individuals in self-care so that they experience optimum health. Services provided include transportation to appointments, nutritional support, counseling with a psychologist or social worker, financial assistance with prescription costs, food bank deliveries for those needing assistance, one-on-one HIV and Hep C education and support, and referrals to other agencies that provide care to HIV+ individuals. The Support Services' client base continues to grow, as such our Client Care Coordinator works closely with the Saskatchewan Health Authority case management team to provide integrated care.

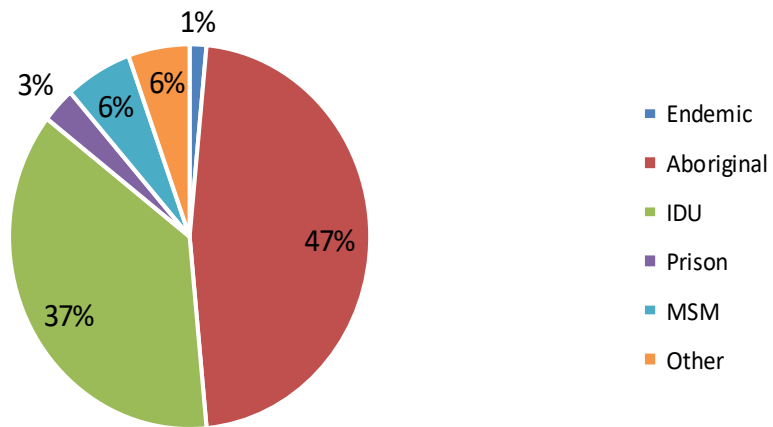
Sadly we lost four of our clients this year, they will be missed but we are grateful to have been able to provide them with support and care throughout the years. Our support would not be possible if it weren't for the tremendous ongoing support given to the Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness fund by the Regal Social Association of Regina (RSAR), Gay & Lesbian Community of Regina (GLCR), the Annual Scotiabank AIDS Walk, World AIDS Day, Dr. Roberta Mckay, and a host of other donors. (See charts below for clients in care, client demographics and gender)

### HIV/HCV Status 133 Individuals in Support Services Program

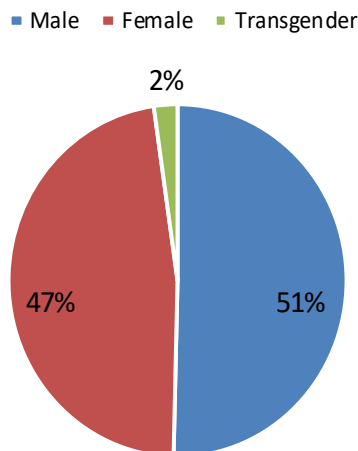




### Client Demographics



### Client Gender

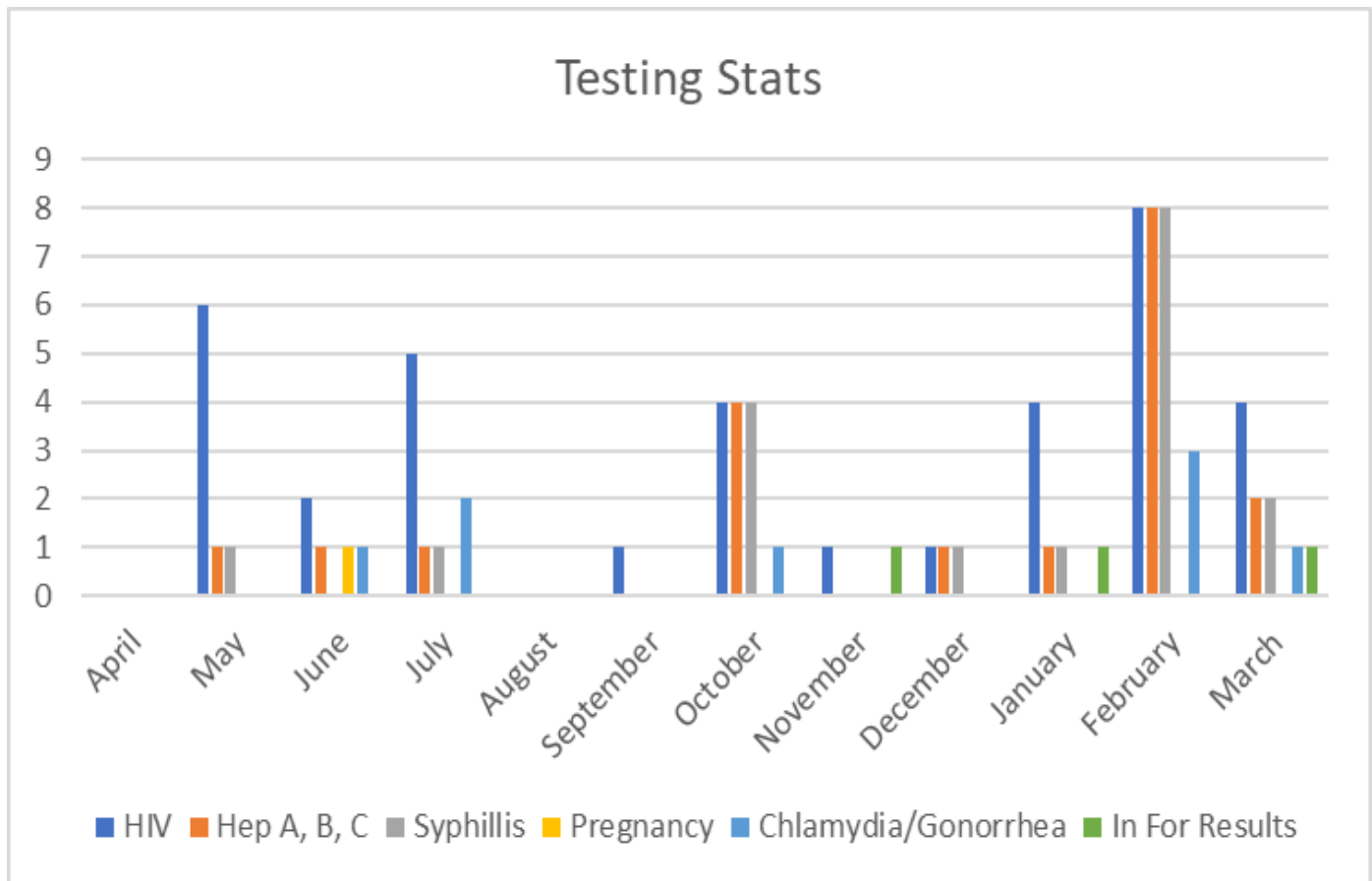


## Wellness Fund

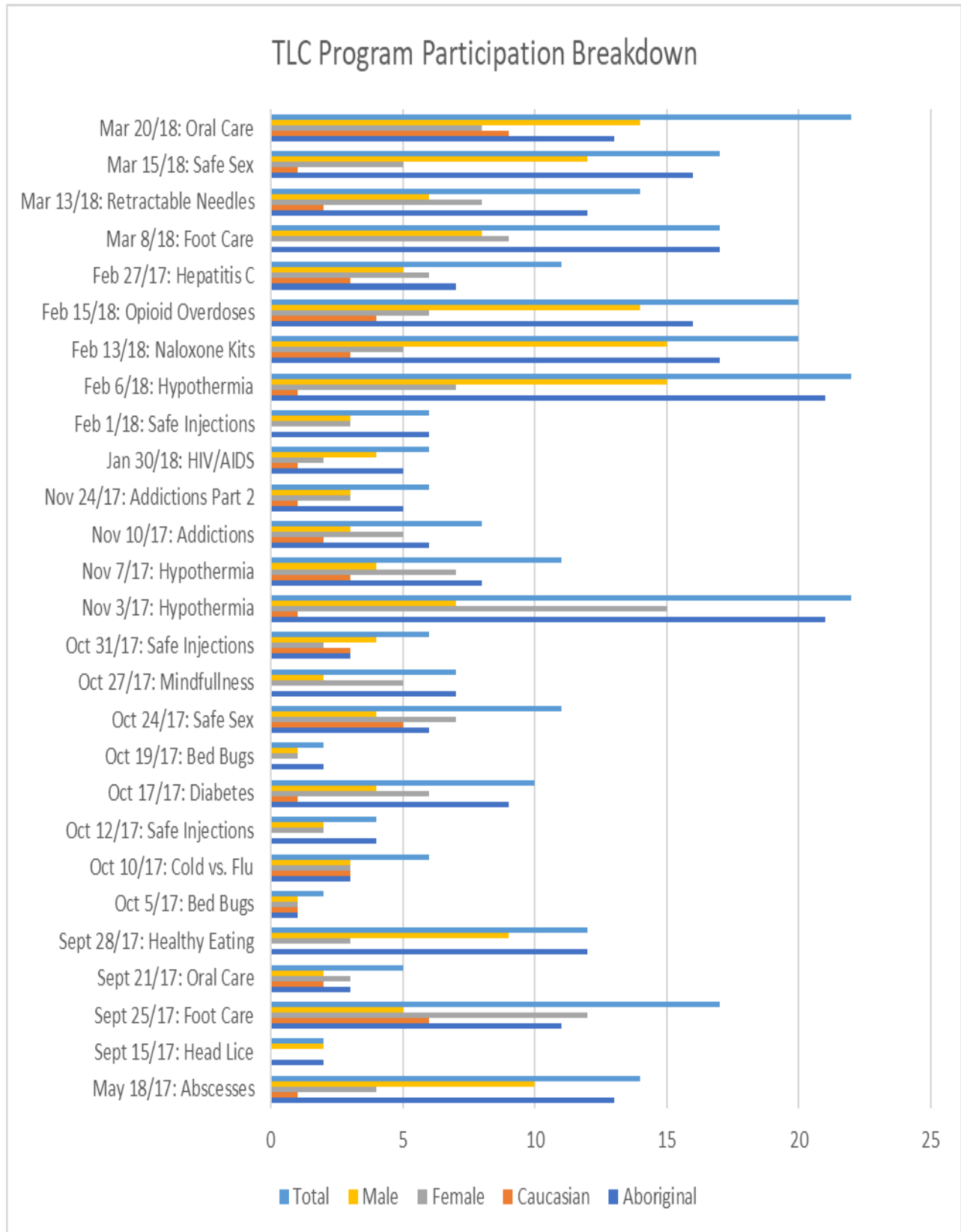
The Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund was started to provide financial assistance for health care related expenses to people living with HIV and AIDS. The Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund is supported by many fundraisers hosted by community agencies and businesses. APSS is very pleased that the fund continues to provide financial assistance to pay for medications, massage therapy, medical/occupational therapy, transportation to doctor visits, baby formula, psychologist services and other needs directly related to HIV positive status. We are very delighted and so very grateful for the tremendous support received from the Regal Social Association of Regina, Scotiabank AIDS Walk and the Gay and Lesbian Community of Regina's annual AIDS Benefit. Their support allows us to continue to assist our clients.

## Drop-In Centre

The Drop-In Center continues to be a resource to the North Central community that offers programs and helpful answers to questions surrounding HIV and HCV. Our Needle Exchange Coordinator, who is also an addictions counsellor is available to consult with clients daily. The Public Health Nurse from Saskatchewan Health Authority is also available on Thursday afternoons and provides testing and consultations as needed. A significant number of people were tested on site as illustrated by the following chart.

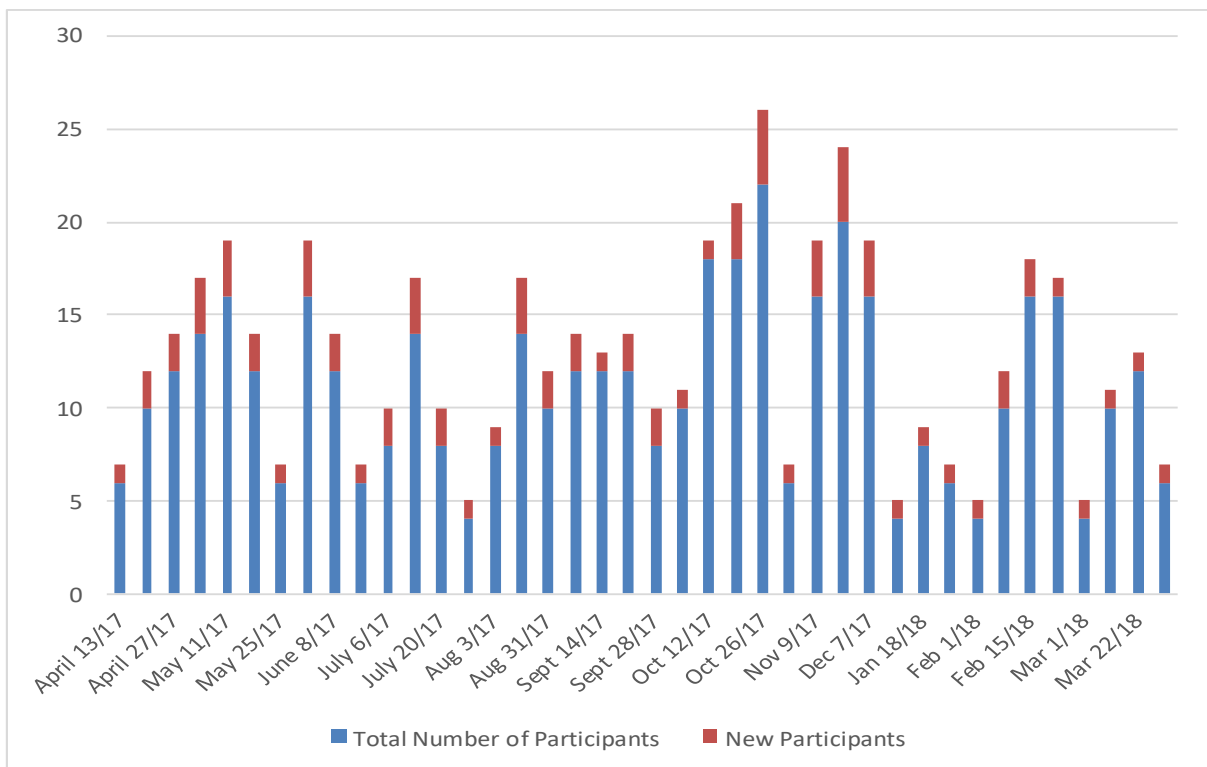


In addition, Tuesdays and Thursdays we provide drop-in clients with short targeted education and awareness (See chart below for topics)



## Anyone-at-Risk Support Group

Funded by the Saskatchewan Health Authority HIV Strategy, the “Anyone-at-Risk” support group meets at APSS each Thursday evening starting at 5pm. Participants are provided with a nutritious meal. Elder Norma-Jean Byrd and Danita Wahpoosewyan facilitate the group. The group functions in a talking circle that allows participants to share their experiences in a non-judgmental environment as well as cover topics on HIV+ participants, shared life experience, CD4 counts, needle use, HIV/HCV, the importance of getting tested, high risk behavior, self-care, triggers and “slips” and how these lead to high risk behaviors, and coping with grief. As seen in the chart below, the group continues to draw both regular attendees and newcomers. Over the past year the group averaged an attendance of 10 individuals. The group is open to anyone from the community who wants to participate.



## Education & Outreach

The Education Program has continued to improve relationships and collaboration with partner agencies, target populations and especially reduce stigma and discrimination among the general public. Over the last year, APSS developed a new partnership with Dojack Detention Centre. This was a great achievement on our part as we had previously hoped not only to target correctional facilities but youth as well. Inmates of Dojack Detention Centre are between the ages of 12-17 and many of them report using injection drugs and sharing needles with family members. We feel HIV/HCV and IDU education is vital among this group. Our Education Program also presented for grade 9-12 in schools in the North Central Community, another vital group in need of HIV/HCV and IDU education.

APSS continues to offer online learning resources about HIV and HCV. This free resource is intended for teachers in grades 5-9 and is aligned with the health education outcomes for each grade required by the Saskatchewan government. It provides teachers with accurate and current, Saskatchewan relevant information about HIV and HCV to benefit priority populations and target audiences. APSS is sharing knowledge about the online resource via a Saskatchewan community of practice for sexual health related matters. As well, APSS has received requests by other non-profits and multi-sectoral partners to share information about this online resource: TeachAids.org requested a brief description, which they would broadcast on their blog; Saskatchewan Prevention Institute requested a description which they would broadcast to a Saskatchewan based community of practice.

**20 teachers** accessed the online resources this year to present to their classes.

We held 2 sexual health booths at the University of Regina and handed out 2,100 condoms and 625 testing cards to students passing by. We were successful in our outreach as we had an increase in testing due to this event.

This year **2,591 people** benefited from the Education and Outreach program.

## Fundraising Events

AIDS Programs hosted the annual **Scotiabank AIDS Walk** which took place on September 9th. Total income for the event was \$13,730.00. Expenses were minimal and proceeds were used to support the Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund.

AIDS Programs was again one of the charities selected by the **Regal Social Association of Regina (RSAR)**. In November the RSAR presented AIDS Programs with a cheque for the Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund.

**World AIDS Day** was commemorated on Dec. 1st. **The Gay and Lesbian Community of Regina (GLCR)** hosted their Annual AIDS Benefit fundraiser and raised \$3,148.35 in one evening for the Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund. **Queen City Pride** held a double donation fundraiser which raised \$820.00 for the Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund.

**The Regina Police Service (RPS)** hosts an annual spring marathon and we have been fortunate to operate a refreshment station. For our involvement in the event the RPS provided AIDS Programs with a cheque for \$500.00 to Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Fund.

# Thank You!

## Our Funders



Saskatchewan  
Ministry of  
Health



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

*Dr. Roberta McKay*

## Our Partners



## Community Partners

All Nations Hope Network

Carmichael Outreach

Gay & Lesbian Community of Regina

Moose Jaw HIV Strategy

North Central Community Association

North Central Family Centre

Planned Parenthood Regina

Regal Social Association of Regina

Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region

Regina & District Food Bank

Santa's Little Elves

SIAST Nursing Program

Street Workers' Advocacy Project

University of Regina/First Nation's University

U of S Nursing Program

UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Diversity

Moose Jaw Pride

Regina Open Door Society



apss

APSS 1325 Albert Street Regina SK, S4R 2R6

Phone: 306-924-8420

Toll Free: 1-877-210-7623 Fax: 306-525-0904

AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan is registered as a charity  
with Canada Revenue Agency: 118779057 RR0001

**AIDS PROGRAMS SOUTH SASK**

*aidsprogramssouthsask.com*



EDUCATION • SUPPORT • FREE TESTING • NEEDLE EXCHANGE