



apss

*aids programs
south saskatchewan*

2018 - 2019 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 versatile board of directors bring dedication and specialized knowledge to their support of this agency.

Board Chair

Kirk Nordick

Vice Chair

Pam Reimer

Treasurer

Jennifer Martuo

Secretary

Debbie Rodger

Director

Tom Janisch

Director

Pauline Streete

Director

Dominik Werber

Staff

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

Executive Director

Shiny Varghese

Client Care Coordinator

Morag Hurn

Needle Exchange Coordinator

Lynette Flamont

Program Coordinator

Sophie Pitman

Education & Information Specialist

Vidya Dhar Reddy

Education Outreach Coordinator

Amanda Sauer

At Risk Support Group

Facilitator Danita Wahpoosewyan

Elder Janet Dufour

Message from the Board Chair

On June 13, 2018, it was my pleasure to be selected as the Chair of the Board of Directors (the board) of AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan (APSS). This year presented a number of challenges for the board and organization as a whole, however, I am pleased with the perseverance shown by our staff and volunteers and their ability to adapt to ensure APSS continues to provide exceptional service to our communities.

In terms of major changes, in January, Stephanie Milla, our Executive Director for the past few years, left APSS in connection with her pending move to the United States. On behalf of the board, I would like to thank Stephanie for her hard work and dedication to the organization. Giving the timing of the departure, an expedited search for her replacement was engaged. A number of qualified candidates applied for the position and after careful consideration, Shiny Mary Varghese, APSS' prior Admin Manager, was appointed as the Executive Director. We are very happy to have Shiny continue her work with the organization.

With respect to financial matters, unfortunately, a substantial deficit was experienced. The deficit arose largely due to the expansion of internal staffing levels without the required increased funding to cover the same. In addition, as part of the financial review conducted in connection with the appointment of the new Executive Director, a number of errors were discovered in the budget and board financial reporting. In order to deal with this and to take steps to ensure that this does not repeat itself, an administrative position was eliminated and the errors were corrected on a go forward basis. In addition, enhanced financial reporting to the board, including projections, were also implemented. With these changes and an increased focus on fundraising efforts, APSS is committed to working towards a balanced budget for the upcoming year.

The APSS bylaws and articles review project, to update and align the same to current practice and provincial governing legislation requirements, is continuing. In connection with this, amendments to the organization's membership requirements will be presented for approval at this year's annual meeting.

I would like to thank our current board members who are continuing for the upcoming year, including those who have indicated their willingness to serve for another term. I would also like to extend our thanks to Dominik Werber who left the board in April of this year. Dominik has been involved with APSS for a number of years including as a member of the board and chair the past few years.

Finally, I would like to thank our wonderful staff and volunteers and all of our exceptional funders, partners and donors. Without your support APSS would not exist.

—*Kirk Nordick*

Message from the Executive Director

In February 2019, I was honored to take on the responsibility as Executive Director for The AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan (APSS), an organization doing critical work to make a positive and significant difference for those living with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS/HCV in Southern Saskatchewan. While transition marked the past fiscal year, the 2019-2020 fiscal year brings new opportunities to enhance the impact of HIV/HCV prevention, education and support while working towards decreasing HIV related stigma/discrimination and continuing to strengthen our rapport with community stakeholders.

Increased Programming: APSS made amazing strides in connection with various communities we serve, creating opportunities for education and partnerships to broaden our reach.

Highlights for the year include:

- Aboriginal HIV/AIDS awareness events and activities in First Nations communities: Kahkewistahaw, Kamsack, Gordon First Nations, Standing Buffalo, Cowessess
- Outreach to youth, high schools, colleges and universities, health centres, and Aboriginal agencies through community events, workshops and presentations
- HIV/HCV education at adult and youth correctional centres in Regina
- Initiated the “HEP C Education and Testing Program” to raise awareness and build capacity to strengthen the community’s response to HEP C
- Provided naloxone training and kits, crack & meth pipes

Amazing Race Against HIV: On Sept 15, 2018 we really shook things up! We were excited to launch the new fundraising event which was warmly embraced by several retailers joining us for our first ever ‘Amazing Race Against HIV’ fundraiser. Many amazing volunteers including the LGBTQ community supported this event. Retaining our success with our outstanding corporate sponsors and adding new community partners, we raised a total of **\$13,877.26** for the Ric Ranger/Jerome Nagel Wellness Fund that supports people living with HIV. This event would not have been a success without the vision and commitment of our staff, board members and volunteers. They were truly amazing!

Financial sustainability: Increased programming with limited/reduced funding and leadership transition contributed to the deficit for the fiscal year 2018-19. On reviewing the financials, errors in the budget were brought to the board’s attention and are now corrected. Increasing funding through fundraising, donations, seeking new/additional funding will be my primary goal to meet the increased programing needs.

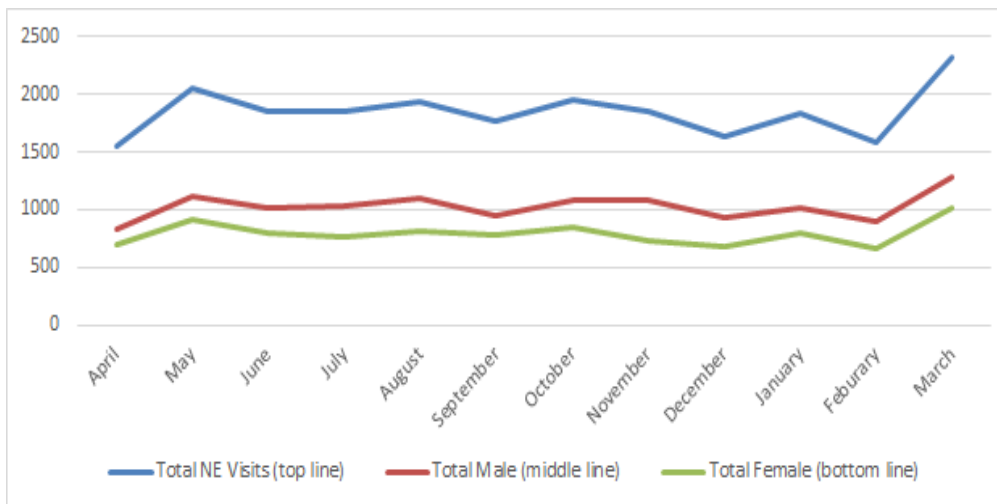
With the ongoing support of our donors, funders, partners and Board for their shared belief in our vision, volunteers who inspire us with their commitment and energy and the APSS staff for their dedication and perseverance, APSS is prepared for new opportunities, challenges and achievements. Thank you to our funders, volunteers and donors. We are so thankful to all of you who continue to help us move forward in our fight against HIV/AIDS/HCV.

—*Shiny MaryVarghese*

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. Open Monday through Friday from 9am – 4:30pm and Saturday from 10am – 4:30pm. NEP clients 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 twice a month. The NEP distributes clean needles, tourniquets, cookers, sterile water, alcohol swabs, cotton filters, crack/meth pipes, and condoms. The NEP also provides information about harm reduction, HIV and HCV prevention and resources. We also collect used or discarded needles from the community and return them to the office for a safe disposal.

In 2018/2019, we conducted 2,690 information/intervention conversation sessions on topics such as harm reduction, overdose prevention, HIV/HCV/STIs, testing, and treatment in the NEP. These sessions lead to an increase in referrals to testing and treatment and increased knowledge in said topics.

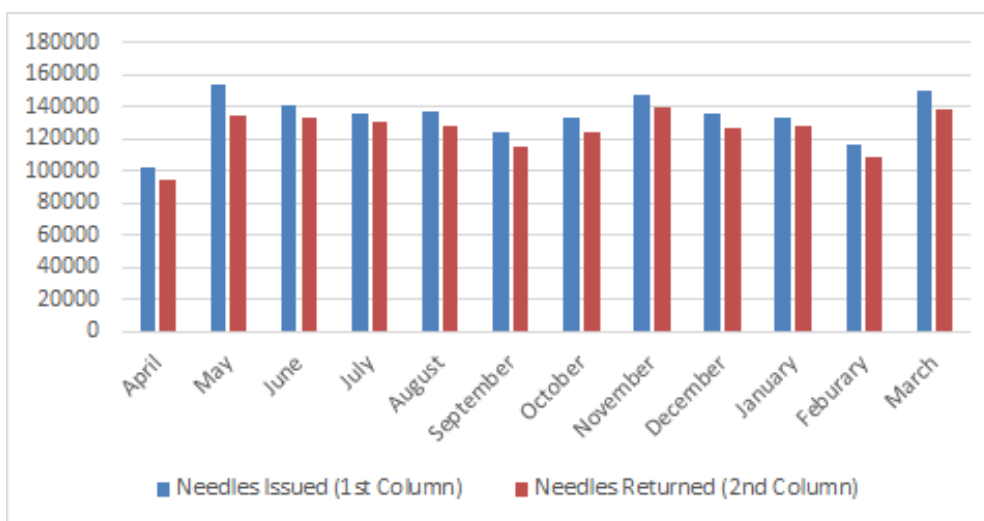


Number of Visits

Female: 9,527

Male: 12,322

Other: 342



Needles Distributed

Needles In: 1,500,748

Needles Out: 1,609,588

Return Rate: 93.2%

Condoms: 25,292

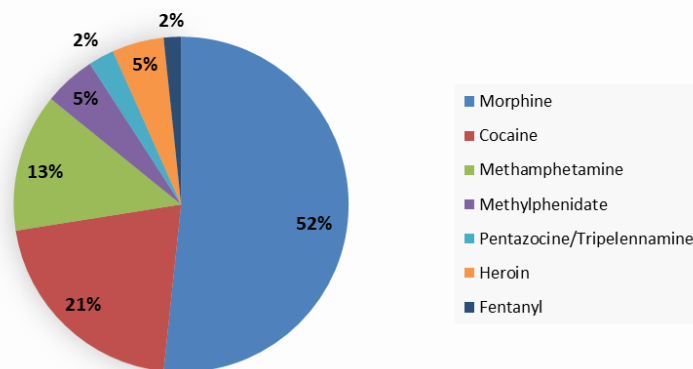
Monthly IDU Survey

In 2018/2019, 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 Choose When Using Needles?



The questions we asked were as followed:

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

February- Do you get tested regularly for STI's?

March- How much do you spend on drugs in a week?

April- When did you start using?

May- Why did you start using?

June- Do you own a Naloxone kit?

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

September- What other methods do you use to get high besides using needles? (snort/huff/smoke/ingest)

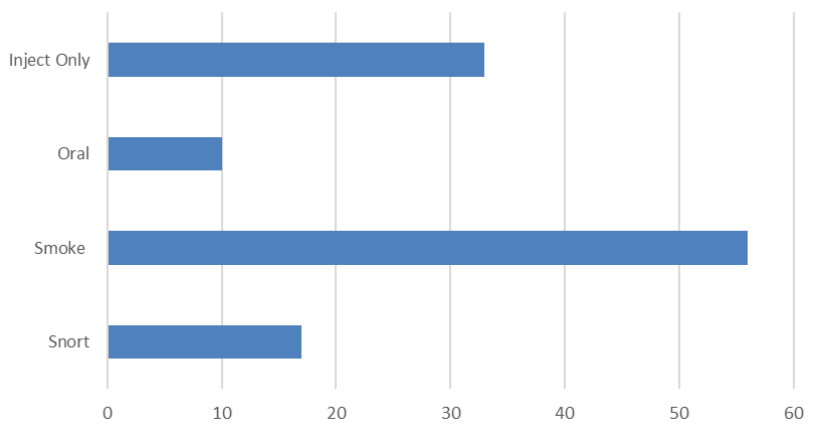
October- Have you overdosed? What on?

November- Have you ever been to treatment?

December- Have you been tested for HIV this year?

(All survey results can be found on our website)

How Else Do You Use Drugs Besides Injecting?



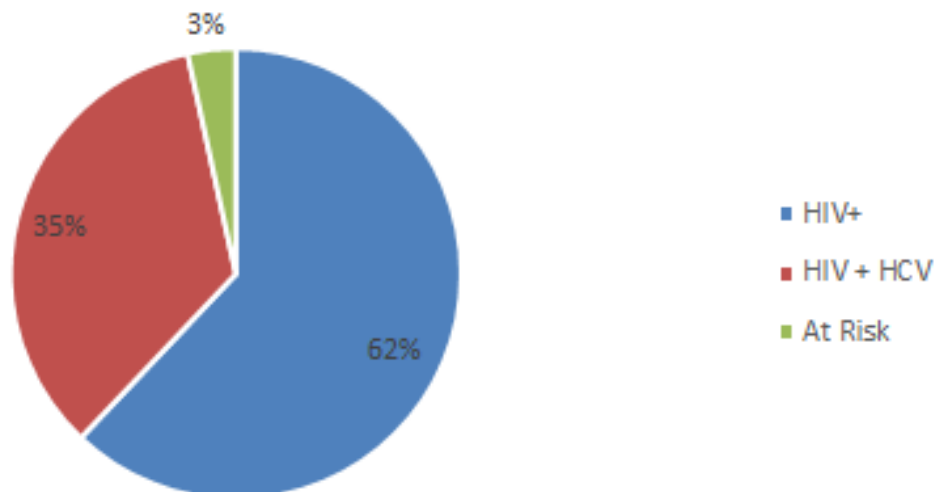
Support Services

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 HCV 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.

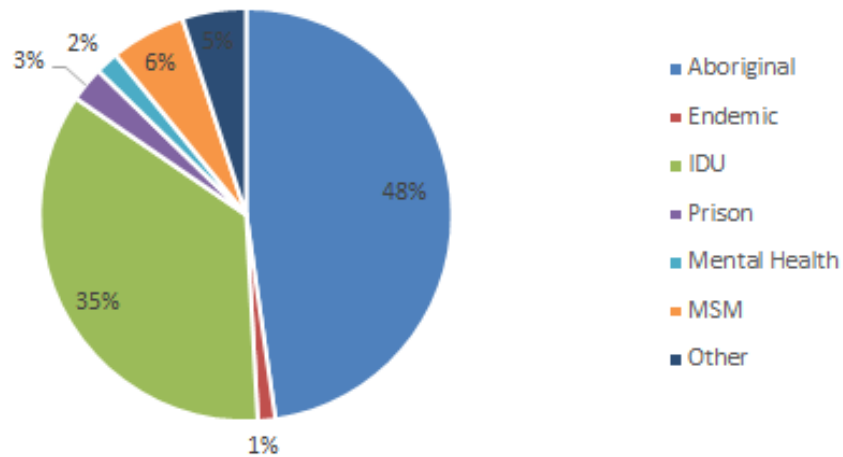
Sadly we lost **two** of our clients this year, they will be missed but we are grateful to have been able to provide them with support and care throughout the years.

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 Amazing Race Against HIV , World AIDS Day, and a host of other donors. (See charts below for clients in care, client demographics and gender)

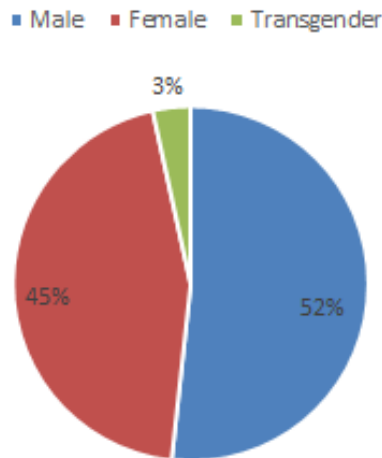
HIV/HCV Status
145 Clients in Support Services Program



Client Demographics



Client Gender

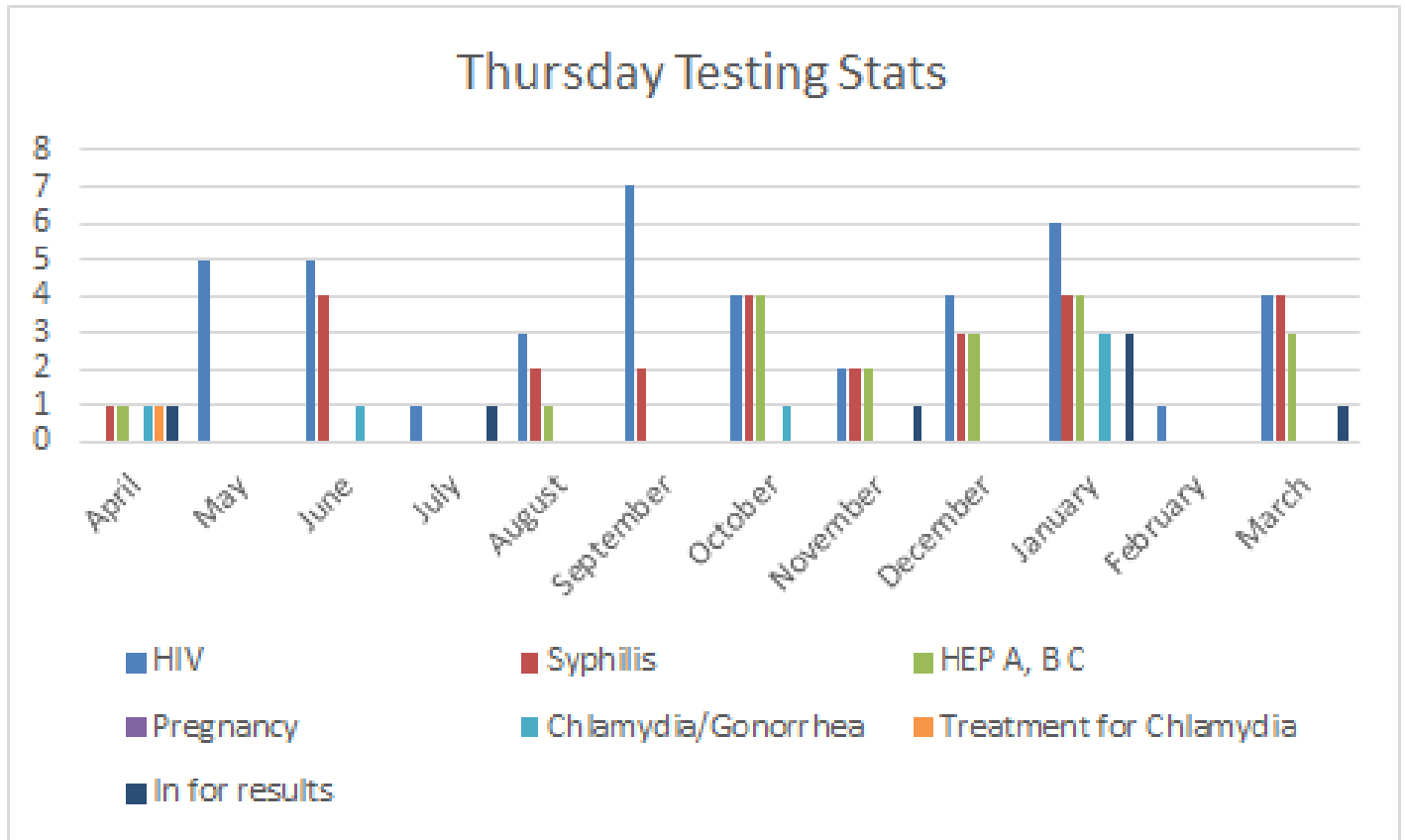


Wellness Fund

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, the Amazing Race Against HIV 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

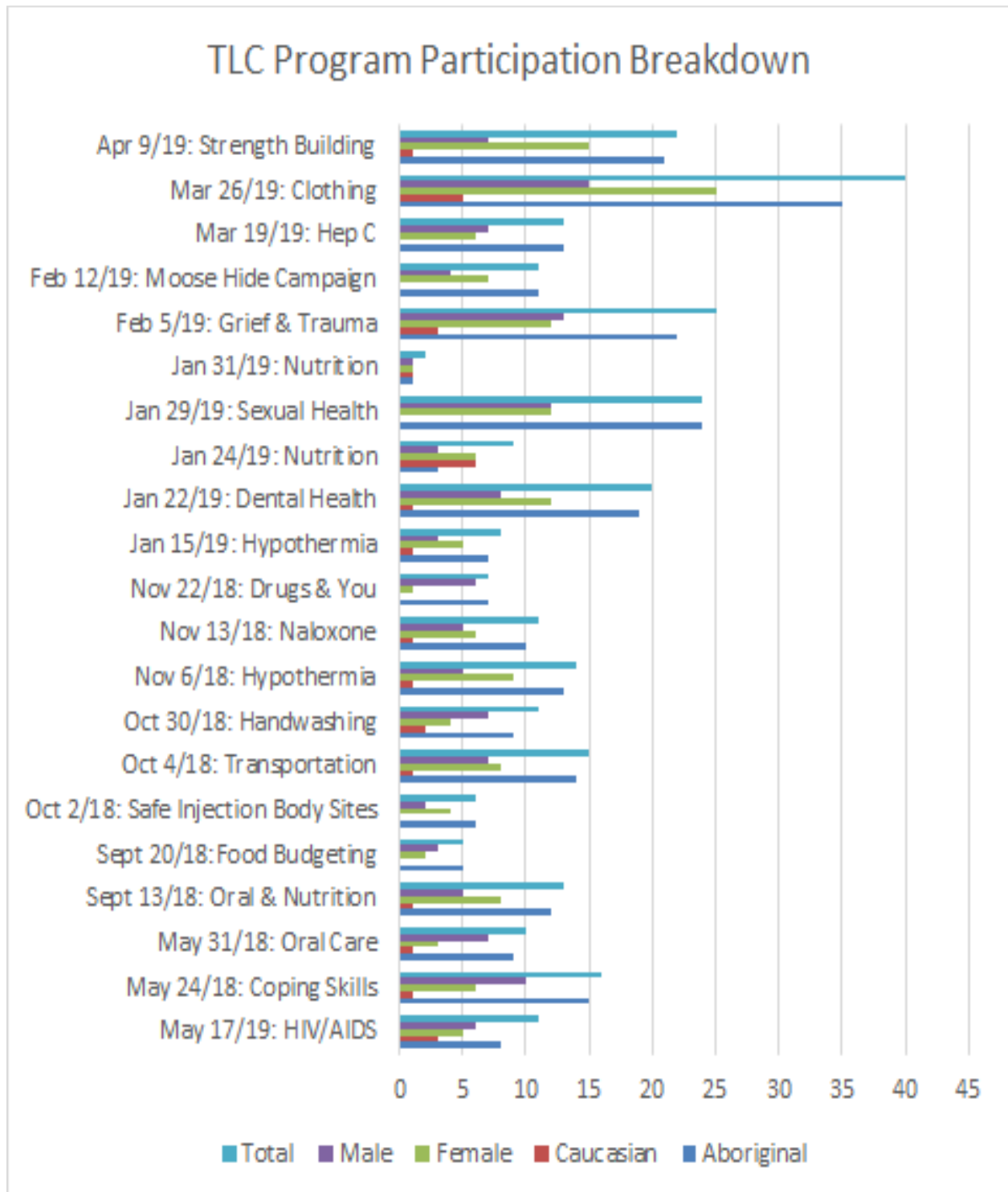
The Drop-In Center continues to be a resource to the North Central community that offers programs and helpful answers to questions surrounding HIV and HCV. Our Needle Exchange Coordinator, who is also an addictions counsellor, is available to consult with clients daily. The Public Health Nurse from Saskatchewan 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.



APSS also conducted their own HCV testing events with local community health professionals and community partner organizations. APSS held four HCV testing events; one of which was held in collaboration with the Newo Yotina Friendship Centre which supports the homeless/transient population. For events held at our office, a fibro scan was done, and a phlebotomist took blood samples for the lab from mainly an IDU population. A nurse tested through point of care 168 people and over 50% were positive for HCV. We were able to get everyone on treatment and connected to care.

These events are vital for stopping the spread of HCV in our communities.

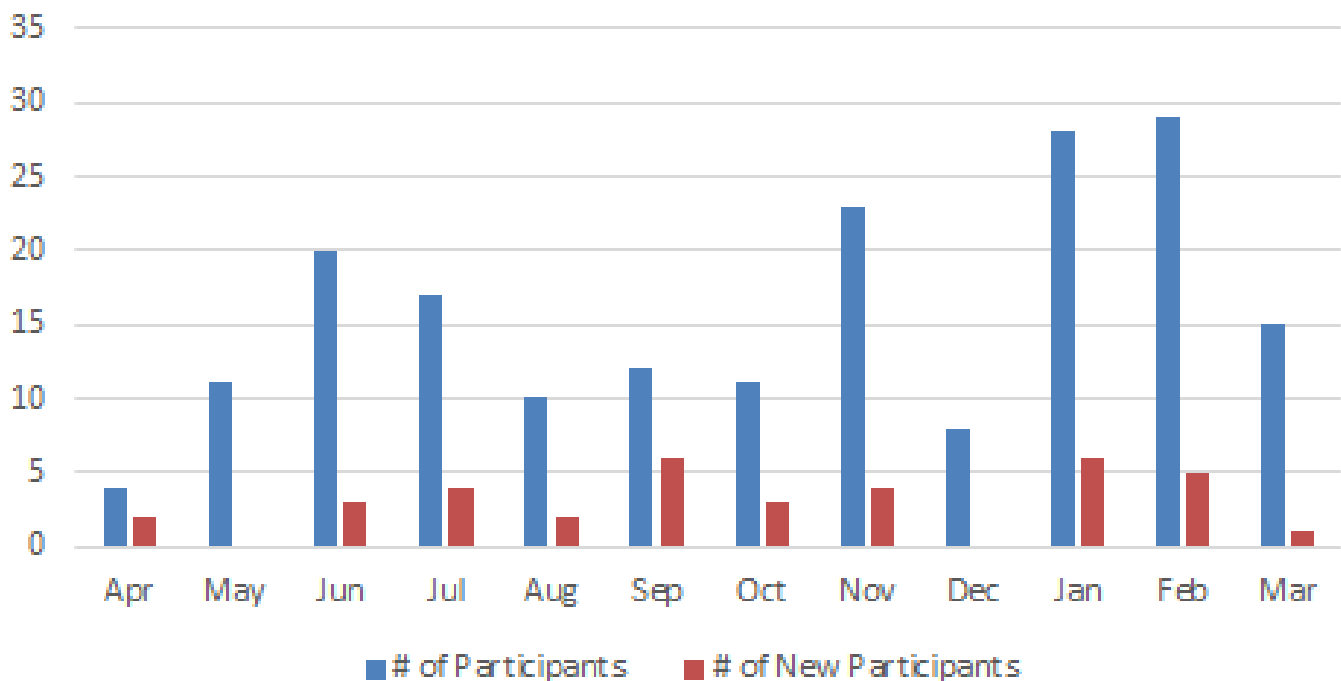
In addition, Tuesdays and Thursdays we provide drop-in clients with short targeted education and awareness (See chart below for topics)



Anyone-at-Risk Support Group

Funded by the Saskatchewan Health Authority HIV Strategy, the “Anyone-at-Risk” support group meets at All Nations Hope each Thursday evening starting at 5pm. Participants are provided with a nutritious meal. Elder Janet Dufour 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 12 individuals. The group is open to anyone from the community who wants to participate.

Thursday At-Risk Group



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 has travelled to various communities including reserves and developed partnerships with Regina Catholic School Division, Regina Public School Division, and Regina Adult Correction Centre.

APSS was able to present to youth between the ages of 12-17, many of them report using injection drugs and sharing needles with family members as well as community members from reserves who have little access to medical services and harm reduction services with higher rates of HIV. We feel HIV/HCV and IDU education is vital among these groups.

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.

18 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 1,000 condom flowers which listed details on where to get tested for HIV/HCV/STI's. We were successful in our outreach as we had an increase in testing due to this event.

This year **4,333 people** benefited from the Education and Outreach program.

Fundraising Events

AIDS Programs hosted the annual **Amazing Race Against HIV** which took place on September 15th. Total income for the event was \$13,877.26. 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 September, the RSAR presented AIDS Programs with a cheque for \$4,196 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 \$6,232.00 in one evening for the Jerome Nagel/Ric Ranger Wellness Fund.

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) partnered with Saskatchewan owned and operated jewelry designers, **Hillberg & Berk**, to create a one-of-a-kind registered nurse necklace. A portion of the proceeds was split between APSS and AIDS Saskatoon.

SUN provided APSS with a cheque for \$26,950 for expanding program outreach.

Thank You!

Our Funders



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Health



Our Partners



Community Partners

All Nations Hope Network

Carmichael Outreach

COB's Bread Bakery

Gay & Lesbian Community of Regina

Moose Jaw HIV Strategy

Moose Jaw Pride

North Central Community Association

North Central Family Centre

Paul Dojack Youth Centre

Planned Parenthood Regina

Queen City Pride

Regal Social Association of Regina

Regina City Transit

Regina Provincial Correctional Centre

Regina & District Food Bank

Regina Open Door Society

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



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AIDS PROGRAMS SOUTH SASK

aidsprogramssouthsask.com



EDUCATION • SUPPORT • FREE TESTING • NEEDLE EXCHANGE