

How One County in Ohio is Finding Success in Combating the Addiction Crisis

RESEARCH BRIEF



“From 2019 to 2020, the state of Ohio witnessed a nearly **25% increase in overdose deaths**, while **Hamilton County recorded an 11% decrease**. This decrease is, in large part, attributable to the work of the Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition (HC ARC) and its strategic, county-wide pre-arrest diversion and deflection efforts since 2015.”

- Sarah Manchak, PhD; Meagan Gosney, MA; Cory Haberman, PhD; Kelly Firesheets, PsyD

The following document is a summary of findings in a recently published article in the [*Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*](#).

Source: Manchak, Sarah M. PhD; Gosney, Meagan E. MA; Haberman, Cory PhD; Firesheets, Kelly C. PsyD. A Data-Driven Response to the Addiction Crisis in Hamilton County, Ohio. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*: November/December 2022 - Volume 28 - Issue Supplement 6 - p S320-S325 doi: 10.1097/PHH.0000000000001566

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Background

The opioid epidemic has swept the nation for over three decades. Since 1999, nearly one million people have lost their lives to overdose in the United States. The annual death rate has been on a continuous upward trend, reaching an all-time high and surpassing 100,000 deaths in 2021.



Ohio has been severely impacted by the opioid epidemic, even being considered the epicenter of the crisis. It has consistently ranked among the top states with the highest drug overdose mortality rates.

Hamilton County, the third largest county in Ohio, set out to find a solution to the growing issue through a centralized effort coordinated by the Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition (HC ARC).

HC ARC is a collaborative group that consists of:

Community Leaders

Faith Community

First Responders

Government

Hospitals

Law Enforcement

Peer Recovery

Public Health

Treatment Providers

Through their efforts, HC ARC successfully launched two pre-arrest diversion and deflection programs — Quick Response Team (QRT) and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD). **Both programs have shown significant results in their evaluations, as highlighted in the sections below.**



Evaluation of the Quick Response Team in Hamilton County

QRTs are community programs that fall under the [Naloxone Plus](#) pathway of the six pathways to deflection. The teams follow up with survivors of overdose, with a goal of connecting them to the most appropriate treatment and resources that meet their needs.

The methods and structure of QRTs can vary from one to the other. In Hamilton County, the team consists of law enforcement, licensed clinicians, and peer recovery support specialists. Initial outreach occurs 2-7 days after a reported overdose, with contact attempted up to three times. Upon successful engagement with the victim, the QRT will work with them until they are connected to treatment or until the individual declines further service.

The first QRT of its kind was created in Colerain Township, a township in Hamilton County.

The second QRT was formed shortly after in Norwood, also located in Hamilton County.

A grant through the Bureau of Justice Assistance was awarded to expand QRTs to remaining jurisdictions.

The county-wide QRT launched in April 2018 and operated two days per week.

HC ARC received an expansion grant, allowing the QRT to work full-time.

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

From April 2018 through August 2021:

The Hamilton County QRT received **934** inbound referrals.

More than half of those successfully contacted were referred to recovery support services.

Of those, **66 percent** successfully accessed and engaged in the services.



Evaluation of Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion in Hamilton County

LEAD is a community-based diversion approach that falls under the [Officer Intervention](#) pathway of the six pathways to deflection. The model was first developed in 2011 in Seattle, Washington as a harm reduction approach for responding to low-level offenses committed by people who struggle with addiction. Since its inception, LEAD programs have been adopted in 60 jurisdictions across the United States.

In 2018, after witnessing the success of the QRT in Hamilton County, HC ARC applied for and received a Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) grant (now called the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program) through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to pilot the LEAD initiative in one jurisdiction. The program was designed to complement the QRT by allowing law enforcement to divert low-level, non-violent individuals with unaddressed addiction, mental illness, or homelessness out of the criminal justice system and into supportive services. Since its launch, LEAD has been expanded to two additional jurisdictions in Hamilton County.

LEAD referrals in Hamilton County involve a warm hand-off from the responding officer to the program staff. Once received, LEAD staff conduct an immediate needs screening to determine what the individual needs to remain safe until they can complete a full psychosocial assessment and be connected to support. While waiting for the assessment, which must be done within 30 days of the incident, the participant's criminal charge is placed on hold. Once the assessment has been completed, the officer is notified and the participant is no longer charged for the offense.

As of January 2022, 76 eligible individuals have been referred to LEAD in Hamilton County. Nearly three-quarters of the eligible individuals completed an intake assessment, and of those, over three-quarters are receiving ongoing support.

76

Individuals Referred

72%

Completed an Intake Assessment

76%

Receiving Ongoing Support

Advancing Programs with Data

Documentation, trend analysis, and reporting are critical components of community programs. In Hamilton County, routine and accurate data collection has allowed for continued quality assurance and improvement.

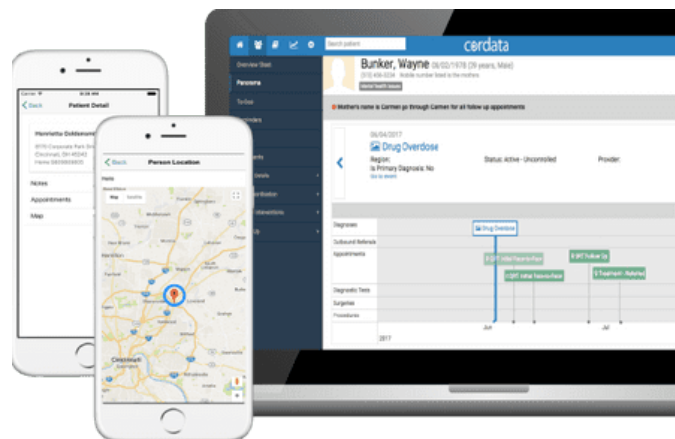
For example...

By analyzing data, it was at one point discovered that a significant amount of people who experienced a non-fatal overdose were being missed by the QRT because EMS were not consistently reporting overdoses. Once realized, the county was able to adjust their operations and involve the fire department in their efforts.

HC ARC utilizes the Hamilton County Fusion Center and Cordata to streamline data collection and maximize efforts. The Fusion Center provides a weekly list of nonfatal overdose victims to the QRT, while Cordata provides the workload management and regular reporting tools for both the QRT and LEAD.

The Cordata Community Navigation platform, both HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2 compliant, was developed with and for deflection programs. The platform can easily be used on a tablet or laptop, allowing for easy access in the field. Team members are able to use the technology to record participant information, individual needs, dates and outcomes, and other relevant case management information.

Once a participant's information is entered into Cordata, team members can keep track of their progress, visually see how many individuals are in each stage of the program, and assess what kind of follow up is needed to help the participant advance to the next step. Teams are also able to use the platform to analyze a wide variety of data points to examine efforts, outcomes, and explore areas of improvement with data-driven recommendations.



With the right technology, community programs like those in Hamilton County are able to effectively address the current opioid crisis and manage the disease of addiction.

cordata

community response

The only comprehensive technology that connects deflection and diversion programs focused on addiction and mental health.



Talk to a Team Member

info@cordatahealth.com



Schedule a Demo

cordatahealth.com/community/schedule-demo



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