



**Report on the current state of the University of Louisiana at Monroe Harm Reduction Education and Referral for Opioid Overdose Reversal (ULM H.E.R.O.) Program and its Progress**

*The following is a summary on the progress of the ULM H.E.R.O. program as it currently stands during the first quarter of the third fiscal year of activity (October - December 2024). This information is intended for the members of the program's Community Advisory Board (CAB) to refer to and to disseminate to others they believe may have an interest in the activity of this program. We greatly appreciate each members' participation on the board and their engagement with us to help reach our goals and to serve our community.*

**Goal 1: Traditional First Responders** (i.e. Firefighters, EMS, Police, Healthcare professionals etc.)

**Goal 2: Community Members** (attendees of community events)

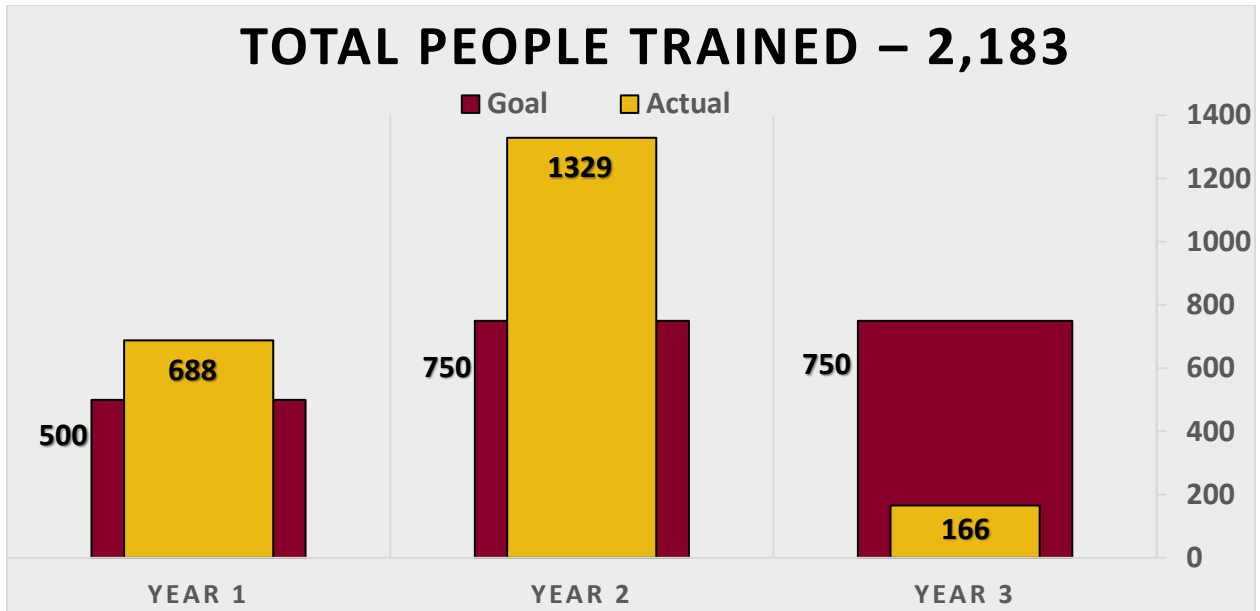
**Goal 3: First Responders in training** (i.e. Medical and Healthcare students)

**Overall Totals**

At the end of our second year, the program had reached the midway point of our granting period. Compared to our first year, we have made great improvements, built on what works, made changes where necessary, and have continued to do the groundwork to continue our success into the next year of our activities. In total, we reached 1,329 individuals in the whole second year. This is nearly double the yearly goal we had set for ourselves at the outset of the grant – 750 – which was surpassed earlier in the year. It is also nearly double the number we reached in all of our first year as well.

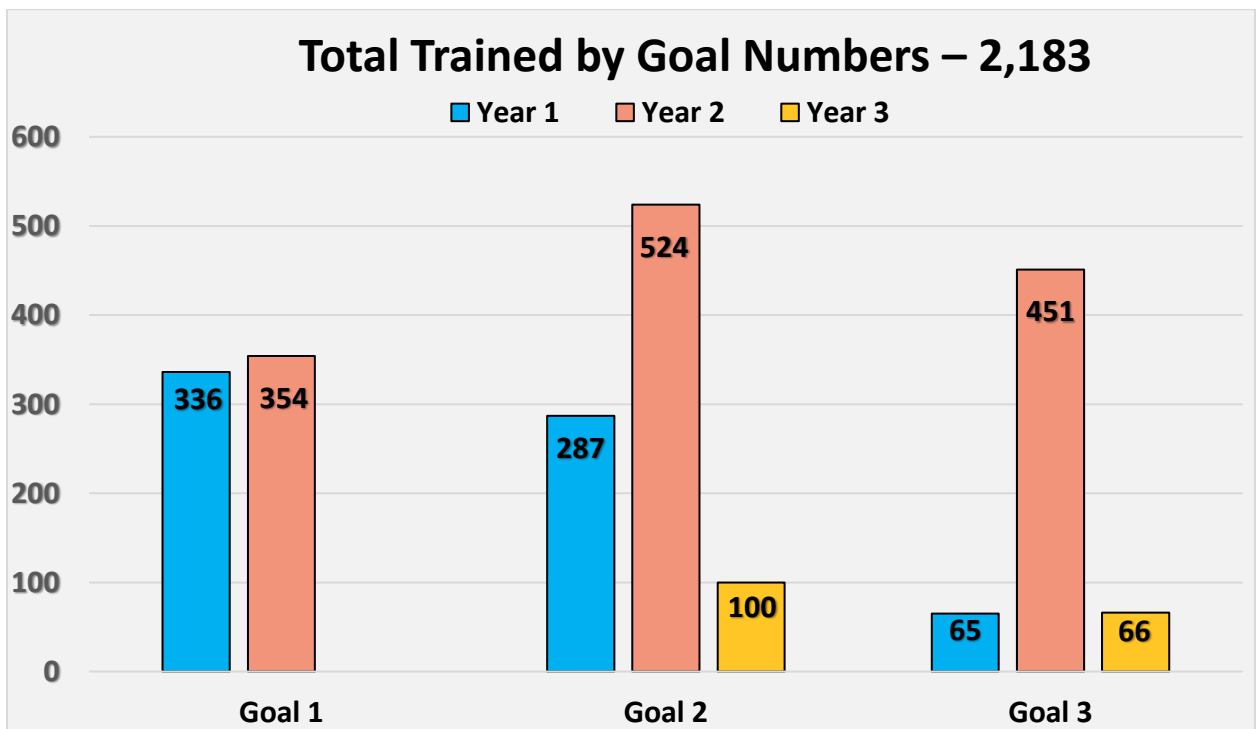
This past quarter, we continued to lay a foundation to build a sustainable process for getting our message out to those in our catchment while also increasing our reach at the same time. We have made more inroads with our expanded catchment, and have even held sessions with organizations in some of our expanded catchment parishes, Lafourche and Ascension, and have attended a community event in Ascension as well. As a reminder, the parishes in our catchment include the greater Orleans area (which includes Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, St. Charles, and St. John the Baptist parishes); the greater Ouachita area (which includes Ouachita parish, the cities of Monroe, West Monroe, the areas of Bawcomville, Brownsville, Calhoun, Claiborne, Lakeshore, and Swartz); and the expanded catchment, which includes the remaining parishes of Union, Morehouse, Richland, Caldwell, Jackson, Lincoln, Livingston, Ascension, and Lafourche.

As the graphic below shows, we have trained 2,183 individuals as of our last event in October:



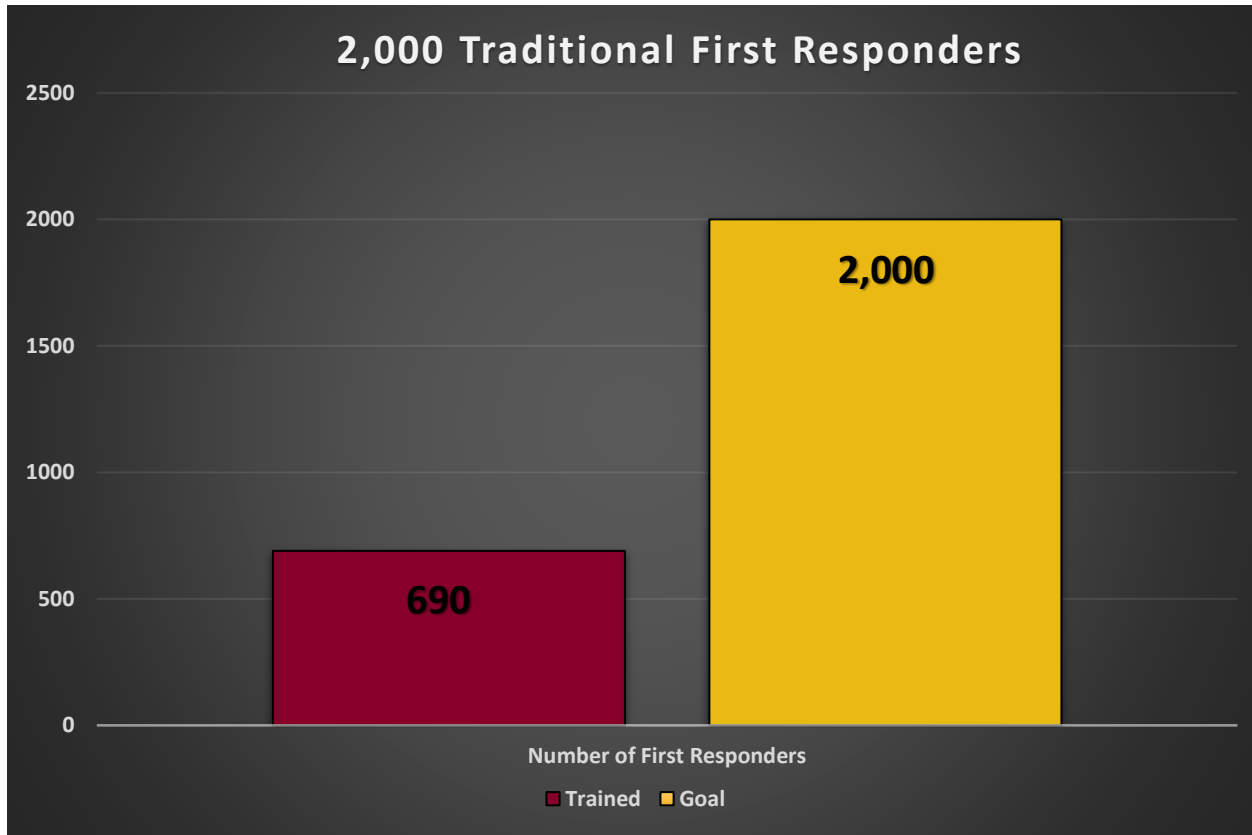
**Breakdown by Goals**

Breaking down our progress so far by our three main goals, we see the specific areas in which we have improved. Throughout this year, we saw continued growth in our numbers across all three goals. Our overall total for goal 2 now stands at 911 individuals trained, and goal 3 stands at 582. Goal 1 is currently at 690, a result of our focus on increasing our outreach to traditional first responder organizations during the second half of this year.



**Goal #1: Traditional First Responders**

As we have mentioned before, as our program’s success has increased this past quarter, we have continued to focus our efforts on our first goal of reaching 2,000 traditional first responders by the end of our grant in 2026. This past quarter we made good progress to this end. In total, we have now trained 690 individuals, or about 35% of the way to our total goal:

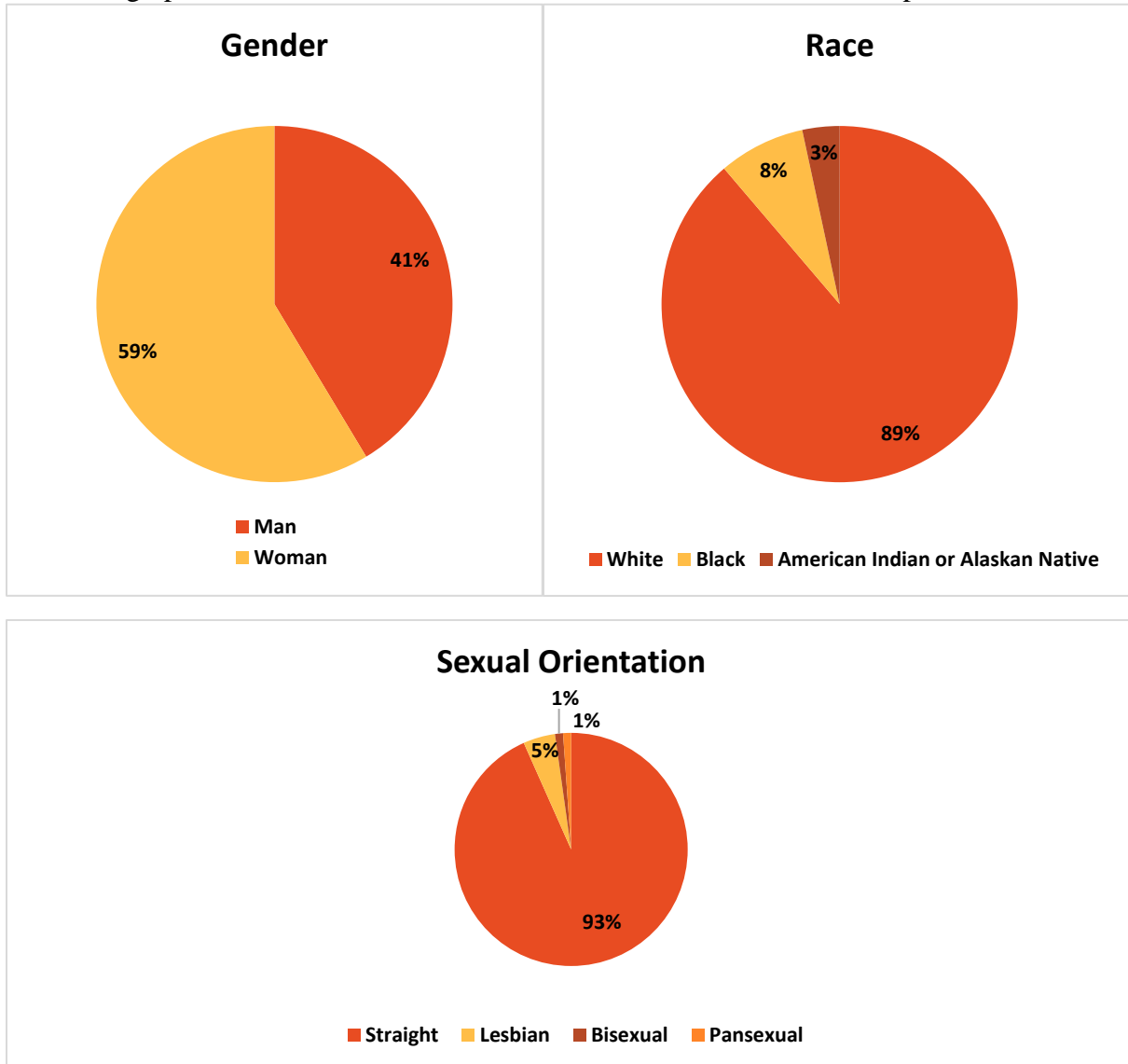


195 of these have been trained between the months of July and September alone. This past quarter represents the most successful quarter for training first responders that we have had since the beginning of the program. We hope to use this as an example moving forward of what success looks like, while also building on what we did well and finding new ways to increase our outreach.

**Goals 2 and 3:**

For goal 2, we have continued our outreach efforts in the communities in our expanded catchment. Since our last report, we have attended an event in one of our new catchment parishes, Ascension parish. This event was the Boucherie and Balloon festival and was held in Sorrento. We were able to pass out all 100 kits which we brought with us in a relatively short amount of time, had positive interactions and were able to educate many people on what naloxone does and how it helps to save lives.

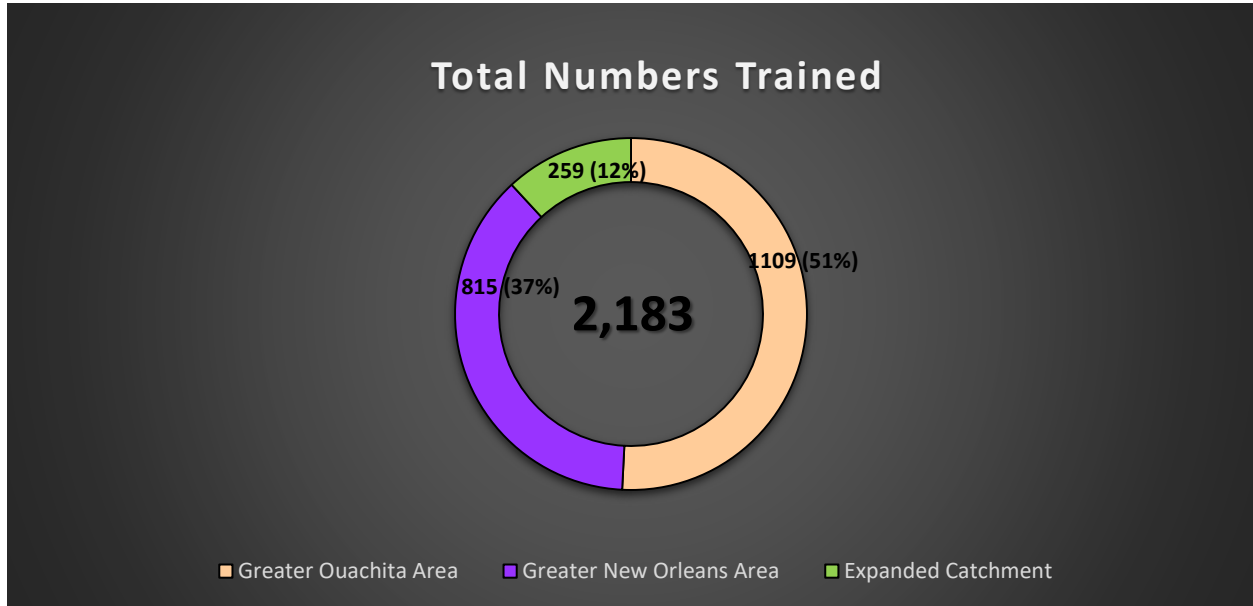
The demographic breakdown of attendees at our booth from this session is presented below.



For our students, we only held one training session since our previous progress report, with 66 ULM Pharmacy students. While we are continuing to increase our outreach efforts to extend our training opportunities to medical and health professional students at other universities within our catchment, we also are glad to have the opportunity to educate ULM students who did not receive the training last year.

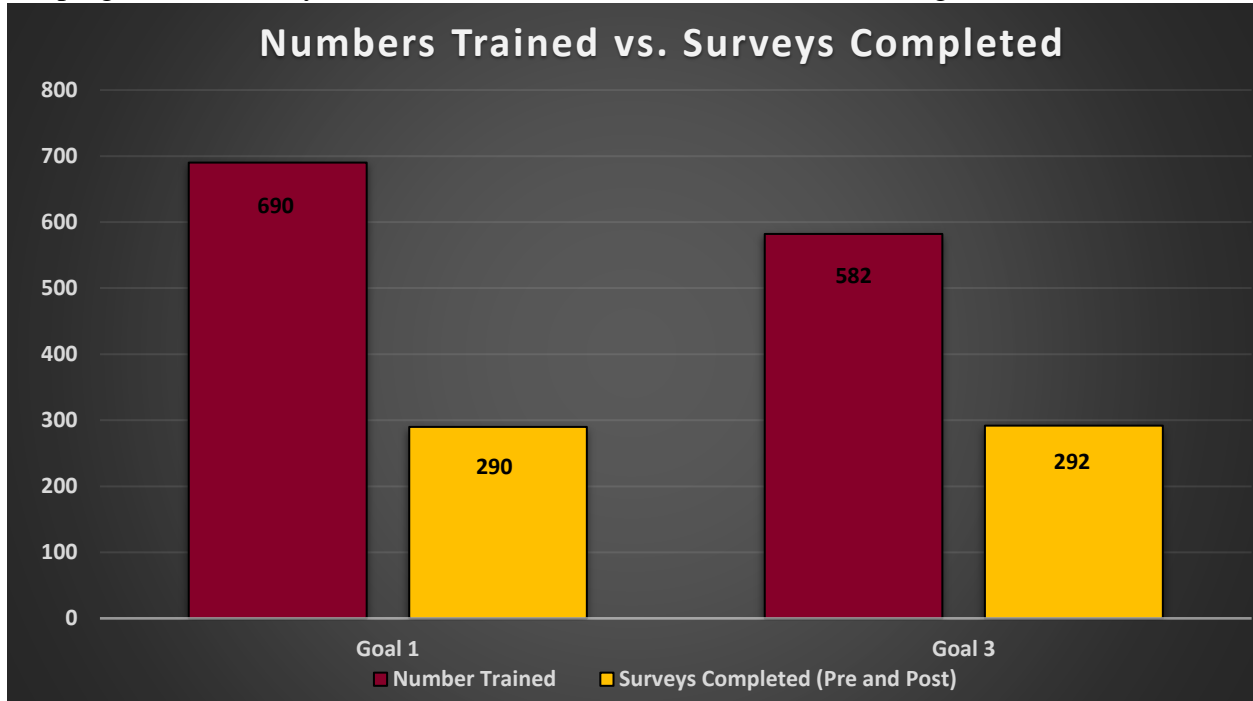
**Breakdown by Location**

We have continued our outreach efforts in the parishes of our original catchment, as well as the parishes in our recently expanded catchment. We have continued to attend events in our expanded catchment. This past quarter, we have attended sessions in both Ascension and Lafourche parishes, where we have trained and made connections with first responders there. As mentioned earlier, we also attended a community event in Ascension parish, where we had good interactions, passed out 100 kits, and made connections with local first responder organizations in the parish. The breakdown by catchment location is presented below:



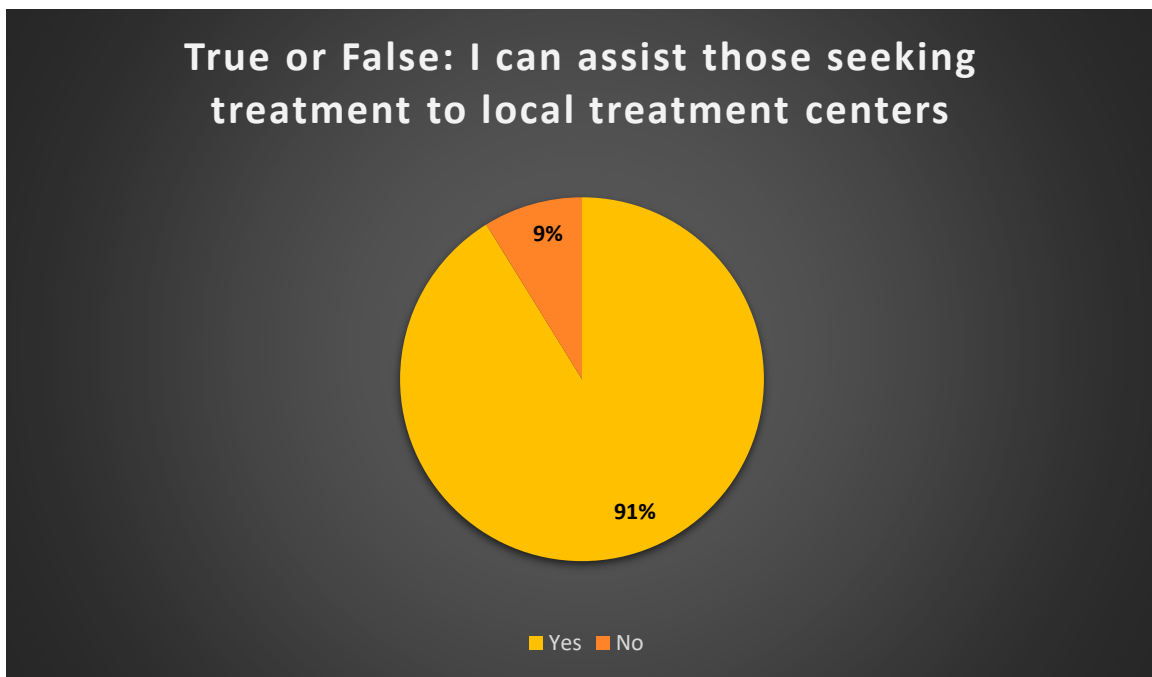
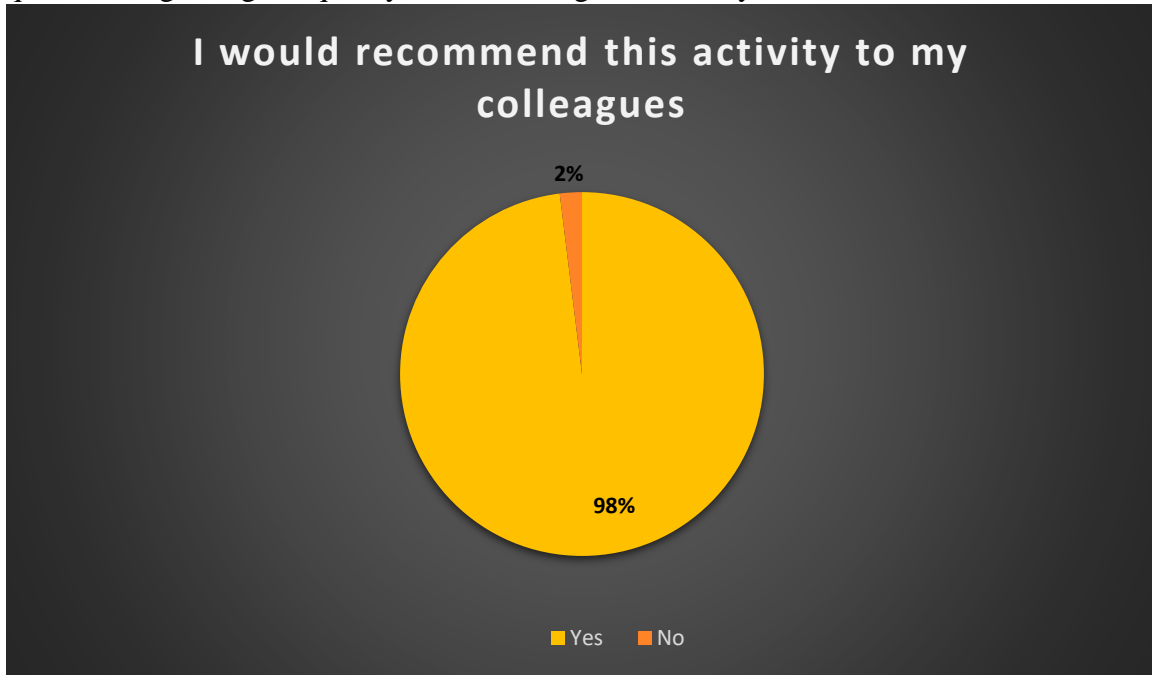
**Survey Responses and Discrepancies**

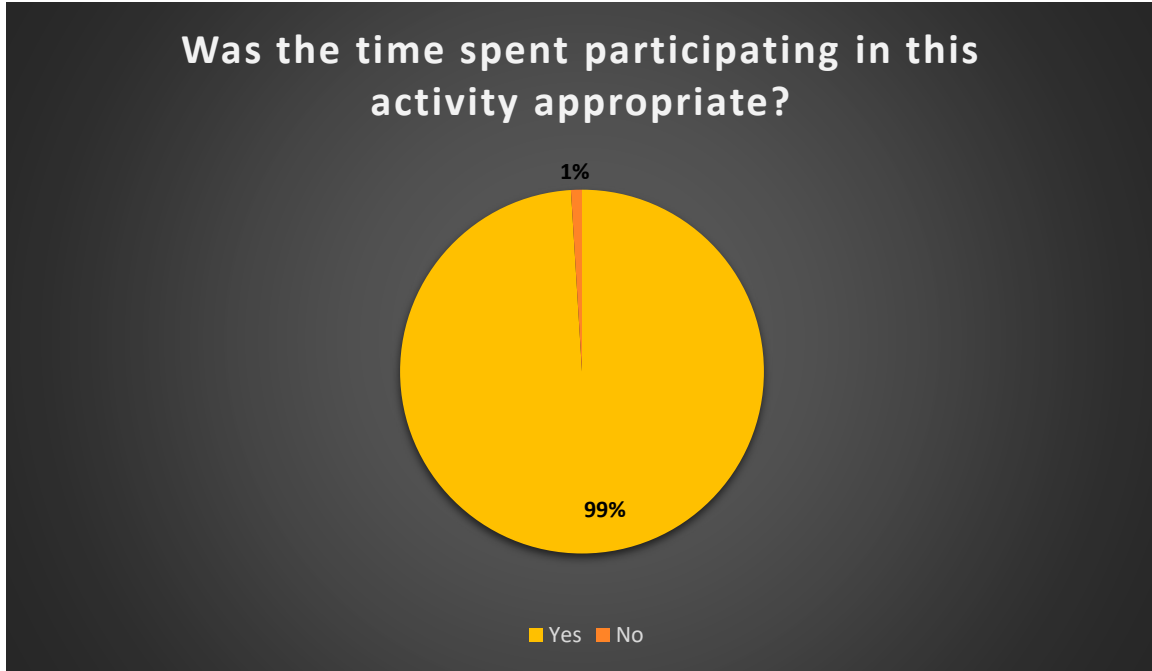
An important part of our program continues to be receiving completed responses from both pre- and post- training surveys, which we distribute to everyone present at our goal 1 and goal 3 sessions. We use this information to conduct statistical analyses for empirical research and to get feedback from our attendees on ways we can improve our approach. In order to get the most use out of these surveys, we try to get the total completion rate for each session as high as possible. In this quarter, we had success with improving our completion rate for goal #1 which we then used for findings which we will present below. The overall survey completion rate for our program is currently at 42% for Goal 1 and 50% for Goal 3, as the figure below shows.



**Training Session Feedback Results**

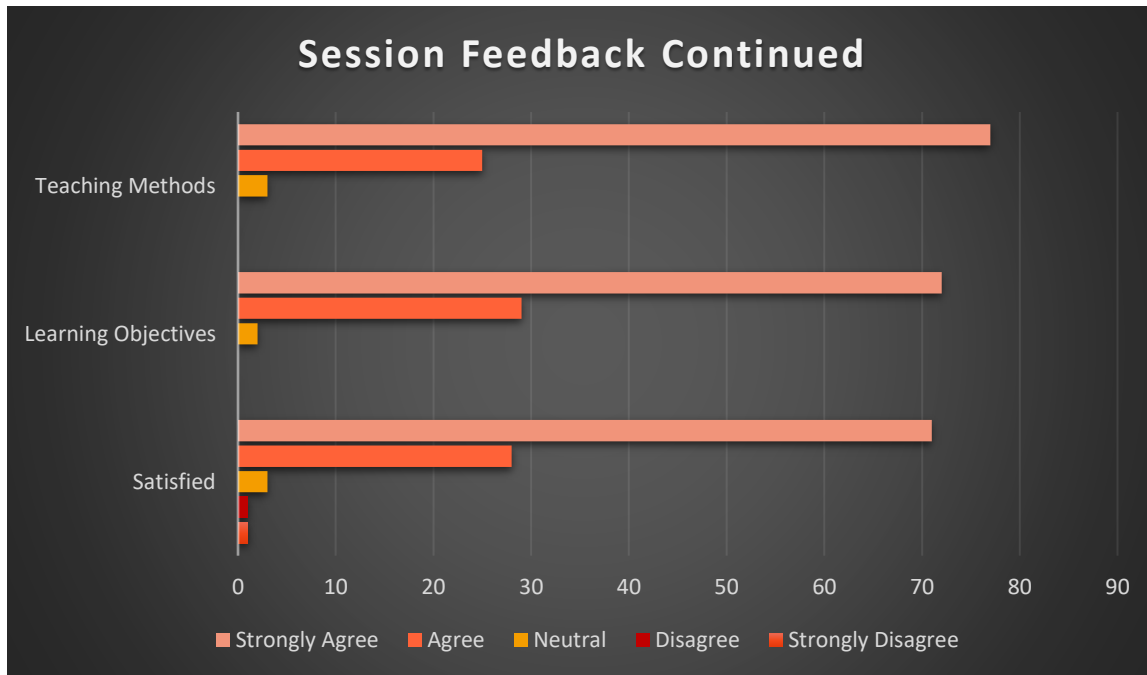
The proceeding descriptive figures show how attendees responded to several broad yes/no questions regarding the quality of the training session they attended.





Below are summary figures showing attendees' attitudes towards specific aspects of the training sessions they attended; possible responses ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

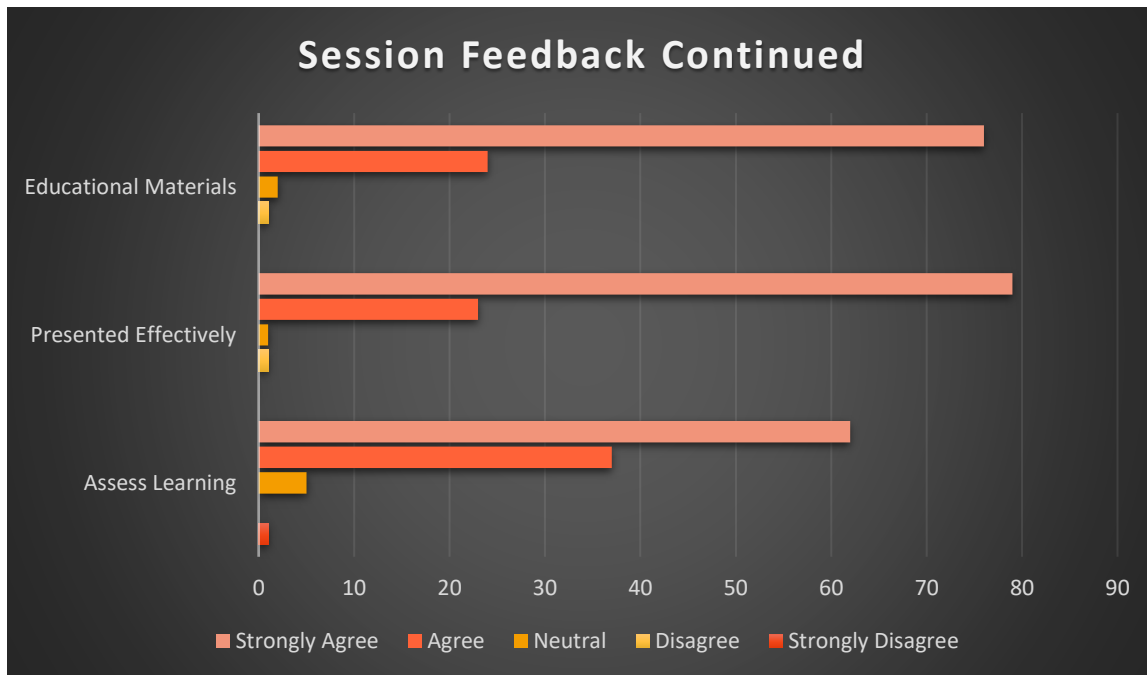




***1. Teaching methods were effective***

***2. Activity met the stated learning objectives***

***3. I am satisfied with the educational content of this activity***

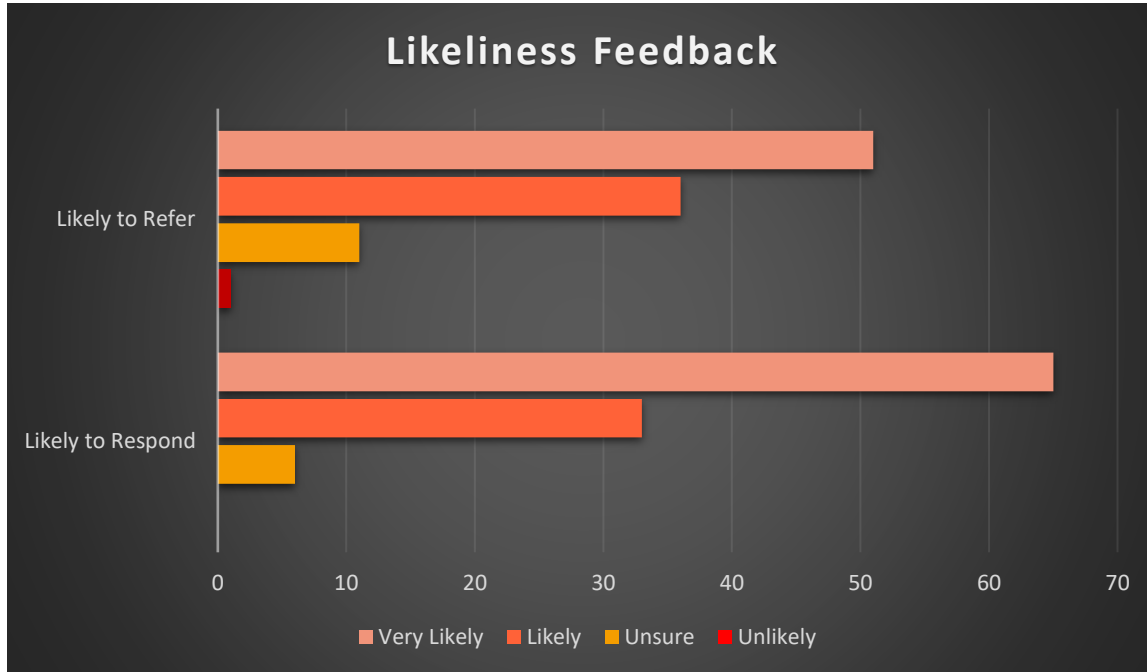


***4. Educational materials were useful and of high quality***

***5. The faculty presented effectively***

***6. I was able to assess my learning during the activity***

Finally, the two questions below gauge respondent's likeliness to respond to an overdose situation and to refer or link someone to a treatment center; possible responses ranged from Very Likely to Very Unlikely (no responses recorded for Very Unlikely, so this category was therefore omitted from the figure).



### **Summary of Activities**

This past quarter we have continued to build on our efforts from earlier this year and increase our outreach to organizations in our catchment, and have also begun to see the results of these earlier efforts. We were able to keep up a continuous schedule of trainings, which is largely what helped us to increase our Goal 1 numbers so successfully this quarter. In total, we held 7 sessions, all of which were traditional first responders. Additionally, this past month we have attended a community event and held a student session as well. Most notably this past quarter, we managed to hold our first training with New Orleans PD, an organization we have long been eager to partner with. Beyond our initial session with them, we now have confirmation of and will be looking forward to holding more sessions with them for larger classes in the future. Also of note, we held Goal 1 sessions in parishes we had not yet before, allowing us to make connections in our expanded catchment areas, these being Lafourche Parish FD and Galvez-Lake FD in Ascension Parish. Finally, we were extremely successful in meeting our yearly goal of 750 individuals overall, and came close to almost doubling that number with over 1,300 individuals trained. We hope to recreate this success as we head into the third year of the grant, where once again our yearly target will be 750.

Additionally, we have continued to receive the benefits of major contributions to our program from our own community advisory board. We have continued to offer continuing education hours through our program to eligible EMS professionals who attend our sessions, and had the opportunity to do so at an event this past quarter. This accreditation is thanks to the efforts of Shane Bellard, a CAB member who has helped us to offer this great incentive to EMS professionals who take our course. We also have had a great deal of help at our Goal 1 sessions this past quarter from another CAB member, Sgt. Bush of Slidell Police Department, who has volunteered his time to contribute to our sessions by informing attendants about his first-hand knowledge of the opioid epidemic and the impact it has had on the community, vividly illustrated through the pictures he has provided our sessions with himself. With these and more contributions, we have had an incredibly successful second year in meeting and surpassing many of our goals.

Finally, we have been able to get approval for hiring a second outreach coordinator who can help our current coordinator with the duties of scheduling sessions and outreach to their respective catchments (one for the area surrounding Ouachita parish, one for the area surrounding New Orleans). As we head into our third year, we hope that the addition of this new full-time team member, we will be able to accomplish our tasks and reach our goals even more efficiently and quickly than the year before.

### **Ongoing Challenges**

This past quarter, one of our challenges was personnel-related. Our previous coordinator left her position and as a result, we needed to hire a replacement, which we were able to do in a relatively short amount of time. Once we are able to get both our new coordinator for the southern catchment and the newest hire who will be for the northern catchment up and running, we believe that the proceeding quarters will be much more active. By dividing the catchment into

northern and southern spheres, we can let the respective coordinators focus more of their time on local travel, rather than being required to drive the distance of the state just to meet with people in person. However, as we have only just hired this second coordinator, we have yet to implement this strategy, but hope to do so soon.

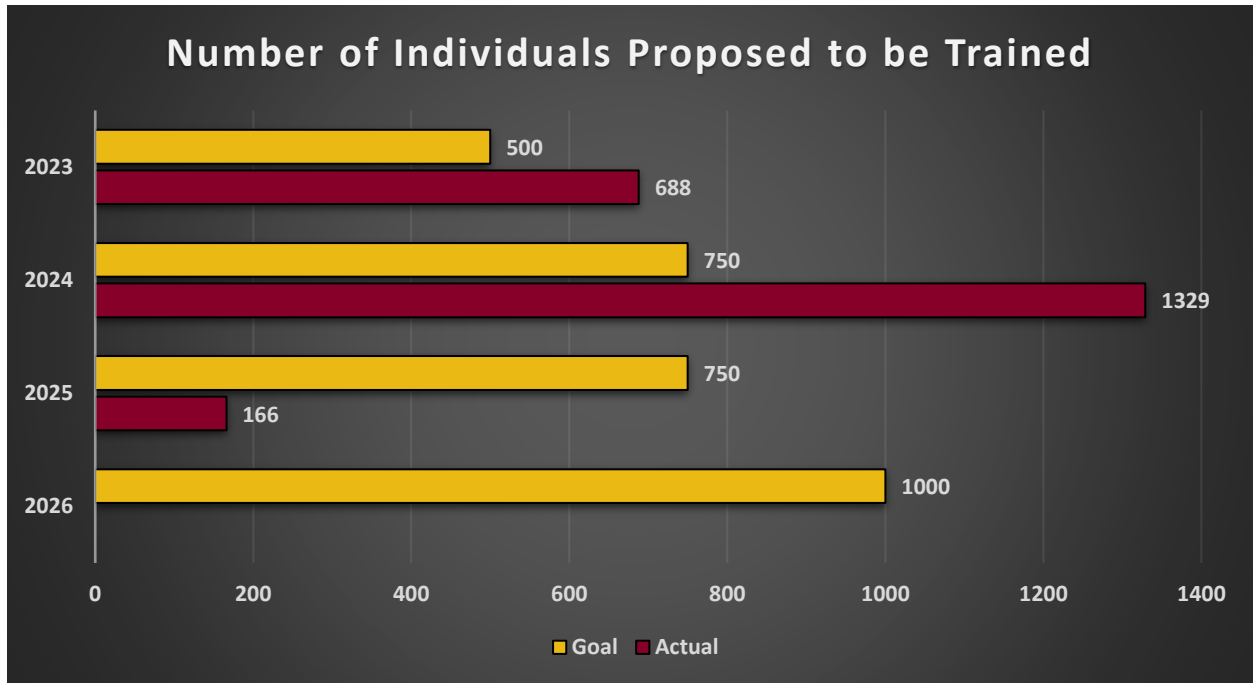
Our ongoing challenge is addressing our Goal 1 – traditional first responders. This remains our primary focus, and while we have made great gains this quarter, we still have approximately 65% of the way to go before reaching our overall target for this goal. We will continue to offer our incentives which we have been able to provide this quarter (free meals, C.E. hours for EMS professionals, free training) and will also continue to differentiate ourselves from other programs by highlighting the aspects of our curriculum that make us unique.

Finally, we are also working on improving our survey completion rate, which we have also seen solid improvement in this past quarter, but still face this as an obstacle as we have worked towards implementing feedback from attendants. While the completion rate has been quite high in comparison to earlier attempts, the length of the survey remains a complaint that many attendants who do not finish seem to have. We will be reviewing the surveys we deploy to find ways to make them both more intuitive and streamlined for respondents to use while not losing valuable information.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, at the end of our second year, we have made great improvements and have begun to systematize our approach to scheduling sessions, reaching out and making new contacts as well as carrying out the functions of the program. This year has been one of laying a foundation which we can now build on to have a more sustainable process moving forward as we look to the beginning of this third year of activity.

We have also seen great improvements which have led us to coming closer to accomplishing our goals and reaching all types of first responders. With our new outreach coordinators doubling our efforts, we believe that we will be able to vastly increase our productivity in the upcoming year and be able to address our ongoing challenges, while recreating and improving upon the success seen this past year.



We would like to thank you again for your continued interest in the success of our program and any and all feedback which you may provide.