



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 at the end of the third quarter of the second fiscal year of activity (April - June 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.

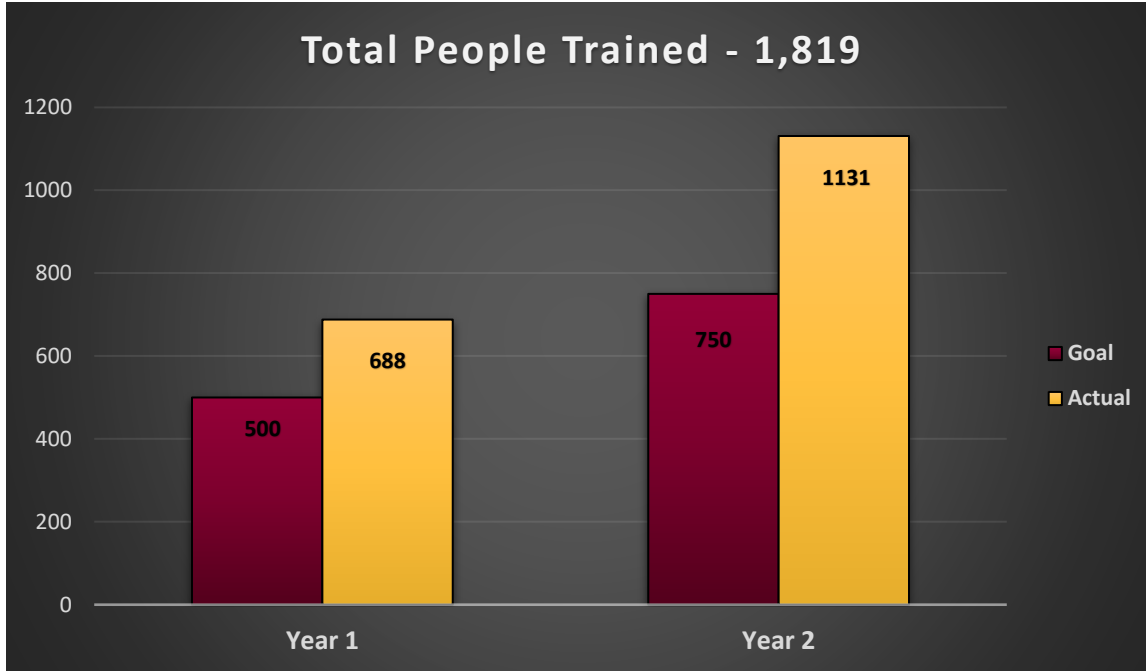
Goal 1: Traditional First Responders (i.e. Firefighters, EMS, Police, Healthcare professionals etc.)

Goal 2: Community Members (attendees of community events)

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

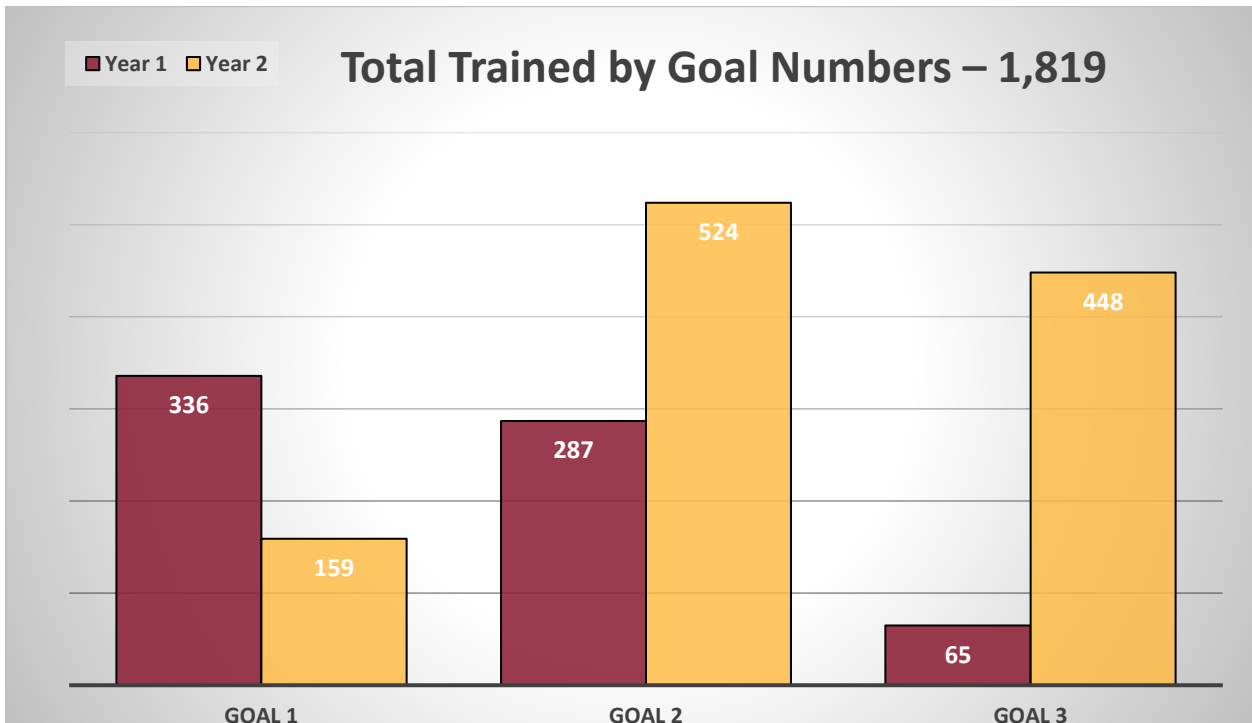
Overall Totals

In the third quarter of our second year, the program was able to surpass our overall goal for the year by a factor of 381 individuals. As such, we have well surpassed our yearly target, by even more than we had in our first year. We have been successful in making connections with other organizations within our catchment, such as the Lafourche Fire Department, Ouachita Parish 911, and the New Orleans Police Department, and have begun in earnest our outreach to our expanded catchment. As a reminder, the parishes in our catchment now 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. We believe that this quarter, and more broadly this year, has been about laying a foundation on which we hope to build a sustainable process for getting our message out to those in our catchment while also continuing to increase our reach in the ensuing years of the grant. As the graphic below shows, we have trained 1,819 individuals as of our last event in June.

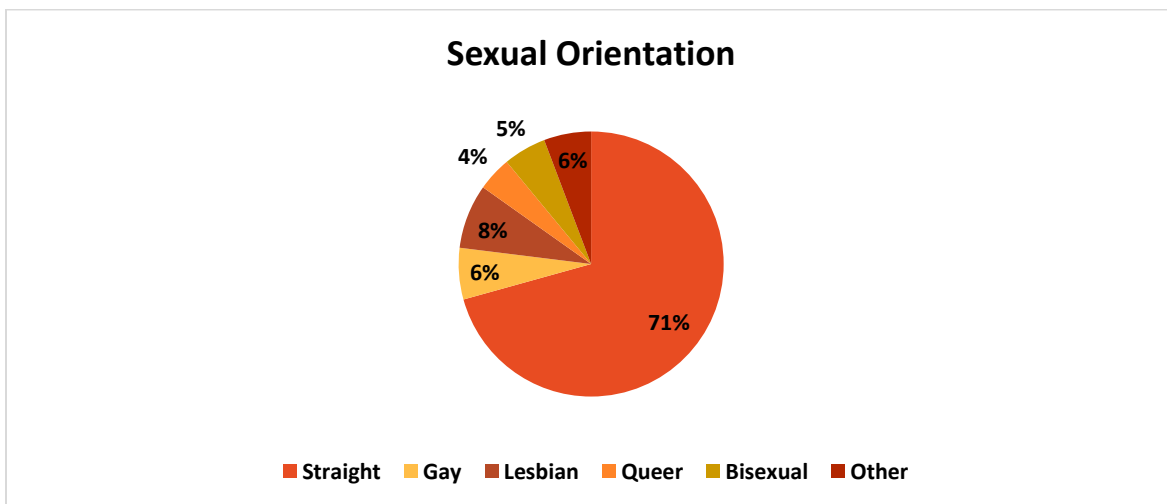
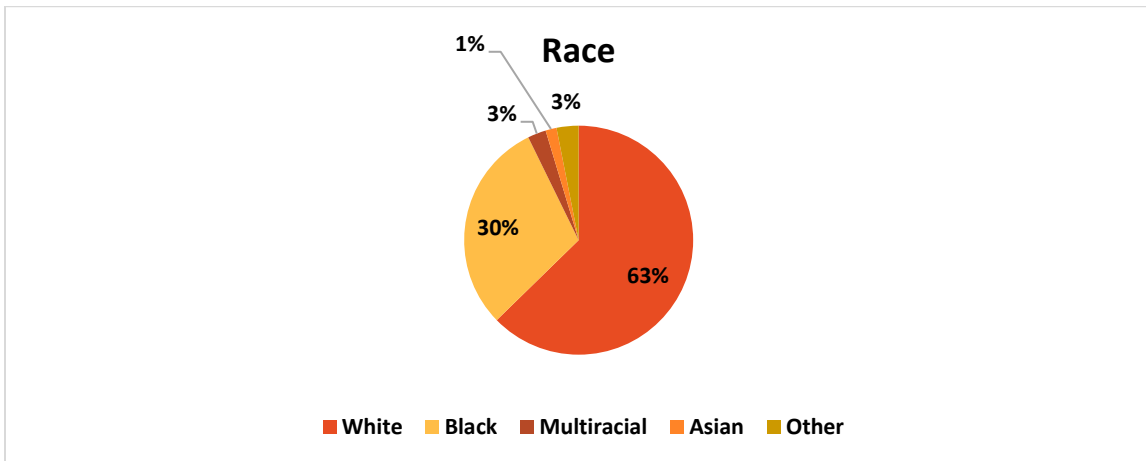
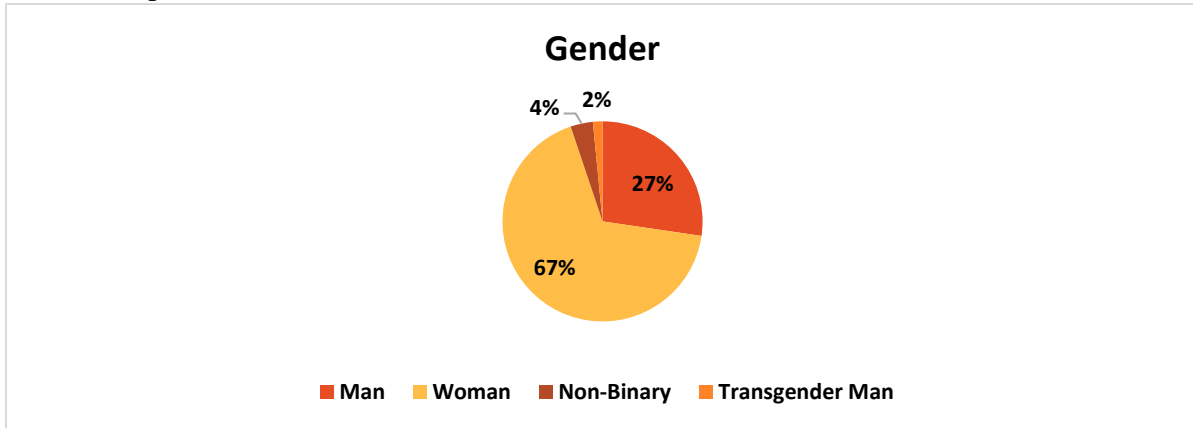


Breakdown by Goals

Breaking down our progress so far by our three main goals, we see the specific areas in which we have improved, and the areas in which we will be focusing on for the remainder of the year. This quarter, we saw continued growth in our numbers across all three goals. Our overall total for goal 2 now stands at 811 individuals trained, and goal 3 stands at 513. Goal 1 is currently at 495, a significant improvement compared to last quarter.



As for goal 2, we have continued our outreach efforts in the communities in our catchment, and have trained nearly twice as many individuals at community events as we had last year, a continuation of the consistent results we have seen for this goal. This quarter, we attended 3 community events: Morehouse May Madness, the Bastion Wellness Fair in New Orleans, and the NELA Pride Festival in Monroe. In total, we were able to distribute 238 kits across these three events. The demographic breakdown of attendees at our booth from these three sessions is presented below.



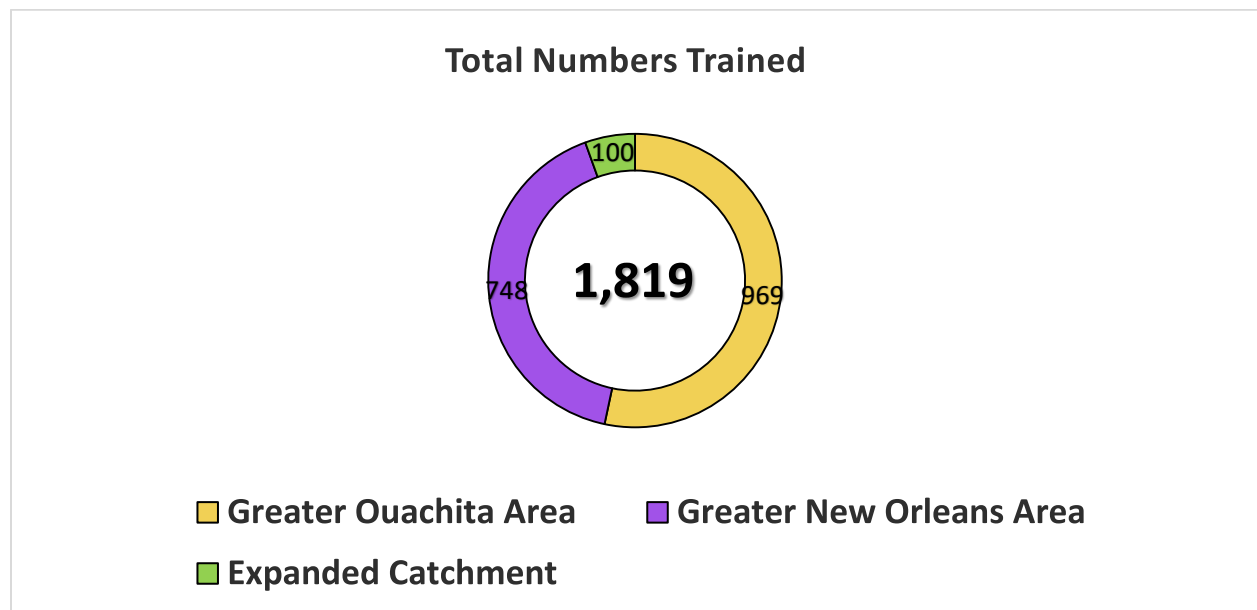
For our students, we only held one training session this quarter, this time with 25 LSU Medical students in New Orleans. We received positive feedback from this session and intend to hold more sessions with LSU health science students in the future. This effort also represents our first step towards branching out of the ULM health science student population we had previously trained. We hope to increase our outreach efforts to extend our training opportunities to medical and health professional students at other universities within our catchment as well.

However, we continue to focus on our goal 1 outreach efforts as our primary goal going forward as this remains the most challenging of the three populations to reach. The results of this renewed focus on goal 1 will be covered in a later section.

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.

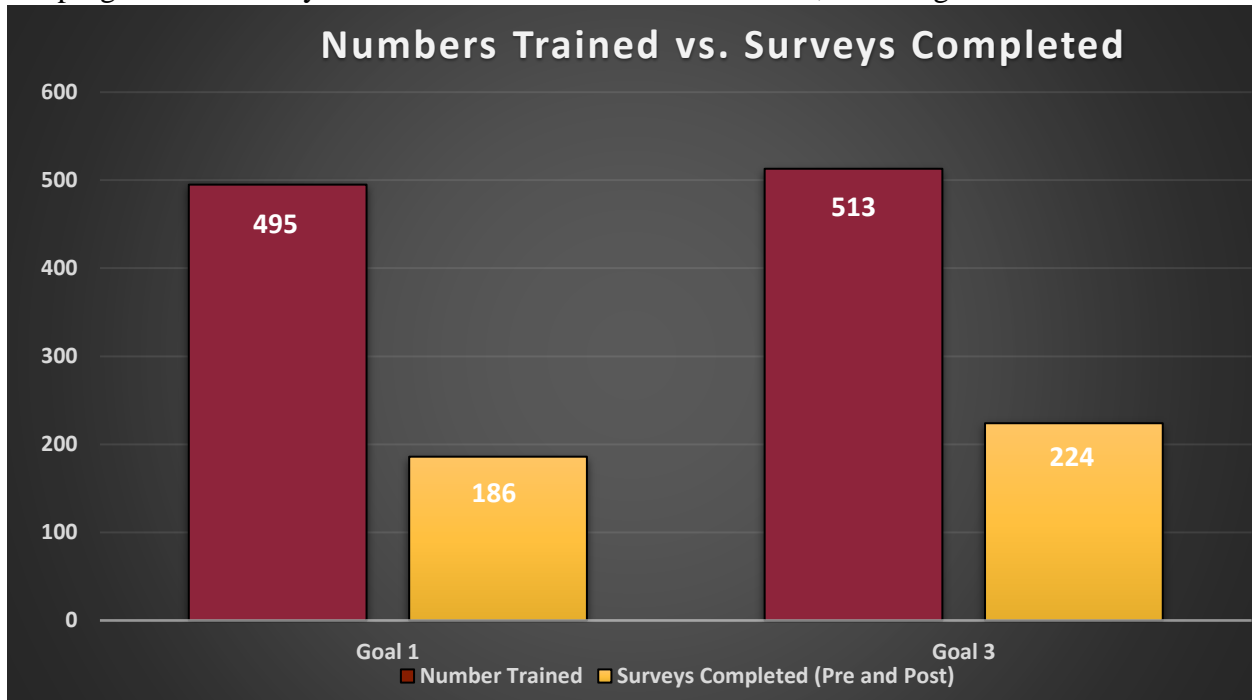
We attended our first event in our expanded catchment, in Morehouse parish, where we were able to have good interactions with attendees at a community event there, pass out 100 kits, and make connections with first responder organizations which are located in that parish. As for our current numbers in our original catchment, we have now trained 748 individuals in the greater Orleans area, and 969 in the greater Ouachita area, as the figure below shows.



Survey Responses and Discrepancies

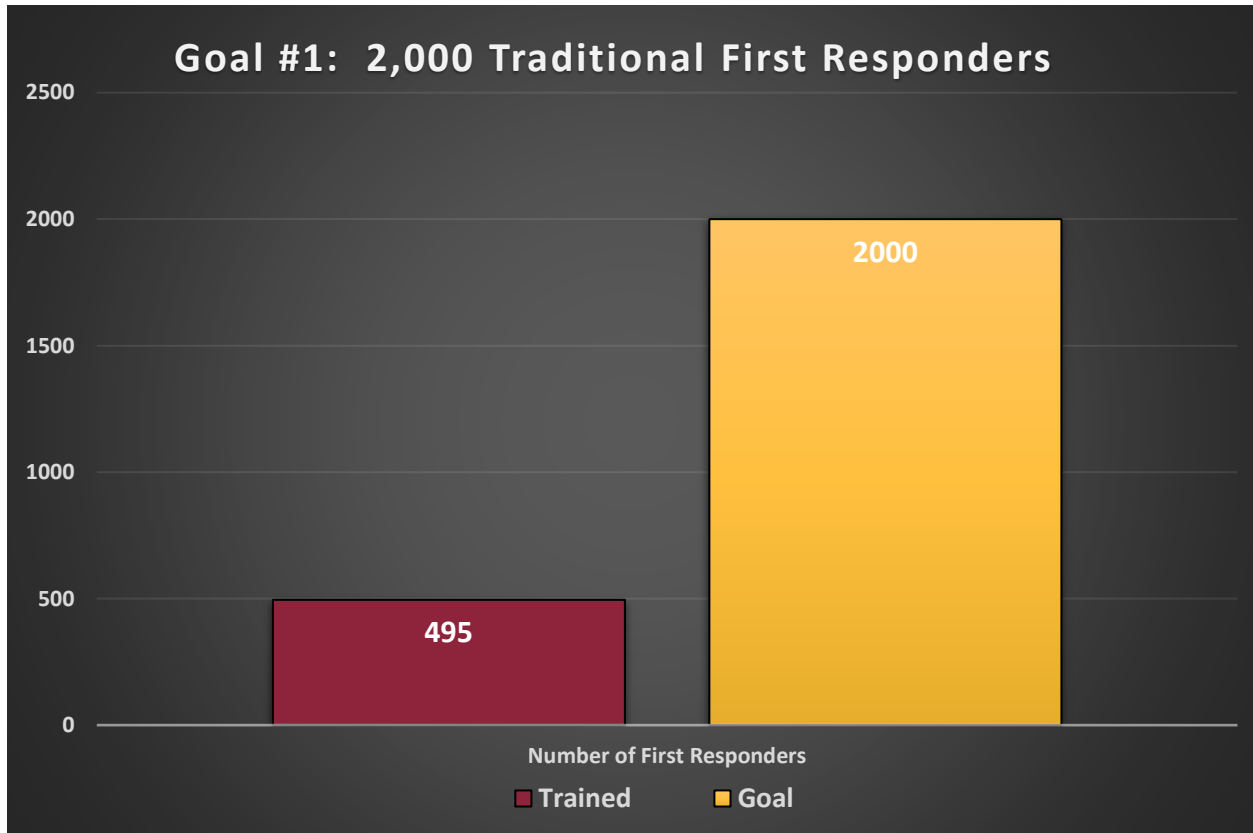
An important part of our program continues to be receiving completed responses from both pre- and post- training surveys, which we distribute to everyone present at our goal 1 and goal 3 sessions. We use this information to conduct statistical analyses for empirical research and to get feedback from 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 38% for Goal 1 and 44% for Goal 3, as the figure below shows.



Goal #1: Traditional First Responders

As mentioned, our primary focus going forward continues to be to increase our outreach to traditional first responder organizations. From the beginning of the grant, our target has been to reach 2,000 first responders for the entirety of the grant. At this point in the grant period, we have nearly hit the one quarter-mark of the overall goal of reaching 2,000 by the end of that time.



We have trained 495 individuals in total, with 126 in this quarter alone. During these most recent sessions, we were able to deploy our newly revised surveys to better gauge the attitudes of our first responder audiences. Because of this, we have some results to share from our recent training sessions from this quarter:

Knowledge of Opioid Overdoses

With a sample of 72 attendees who completed the Opioid Overdose Knowledge Scale portions on both the pre- and post- training surveys, we found that the overall knowledge of attendees showed a statistically significant increase after the sessions.

The Modified OOKS (MOOKS) consists of 8 multiple choice questions, with a maximum possible score of 15. Responses were coded (0/1 where 1 point was given for each correct response) with “Don’t Know” responses excluded from the final analysis. Results from a paired samples t-test showed that there was a statistically significant increase in attendees’ knowledge about opioid overdose response as measured on the MOOKS, by an average increase of 2.08 points (a mean score of 10.76 on the pre-training; a mean score of 12.85 on the post-training; $p \leq .001$).

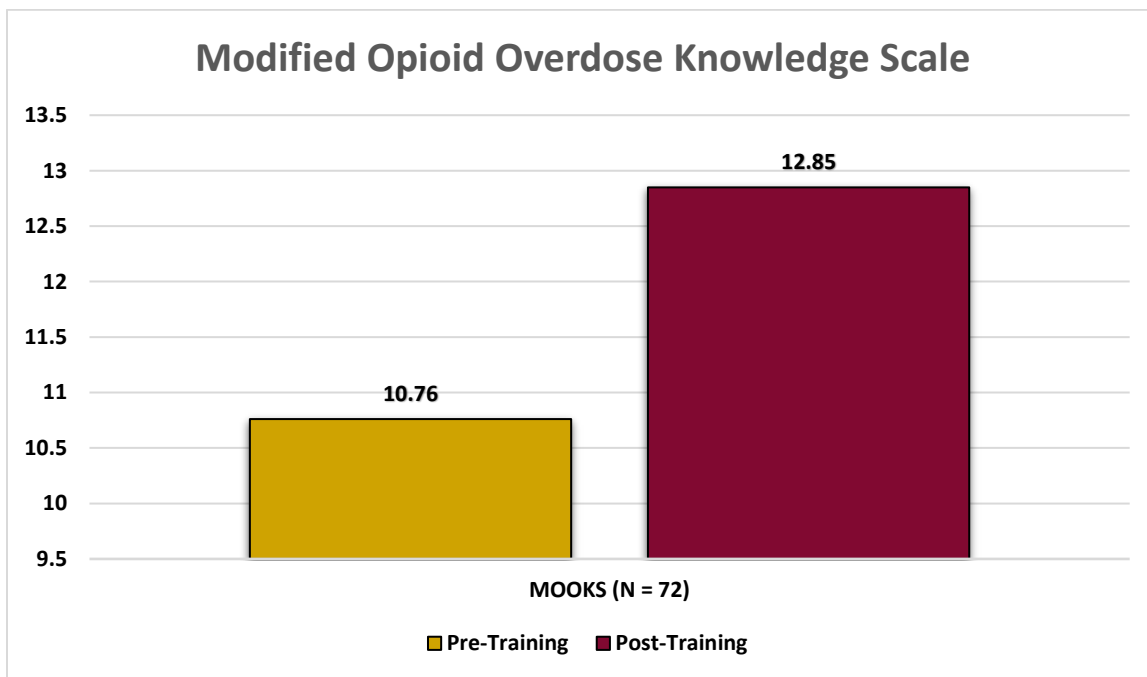
Attitudes towards Harm Reduction strategies

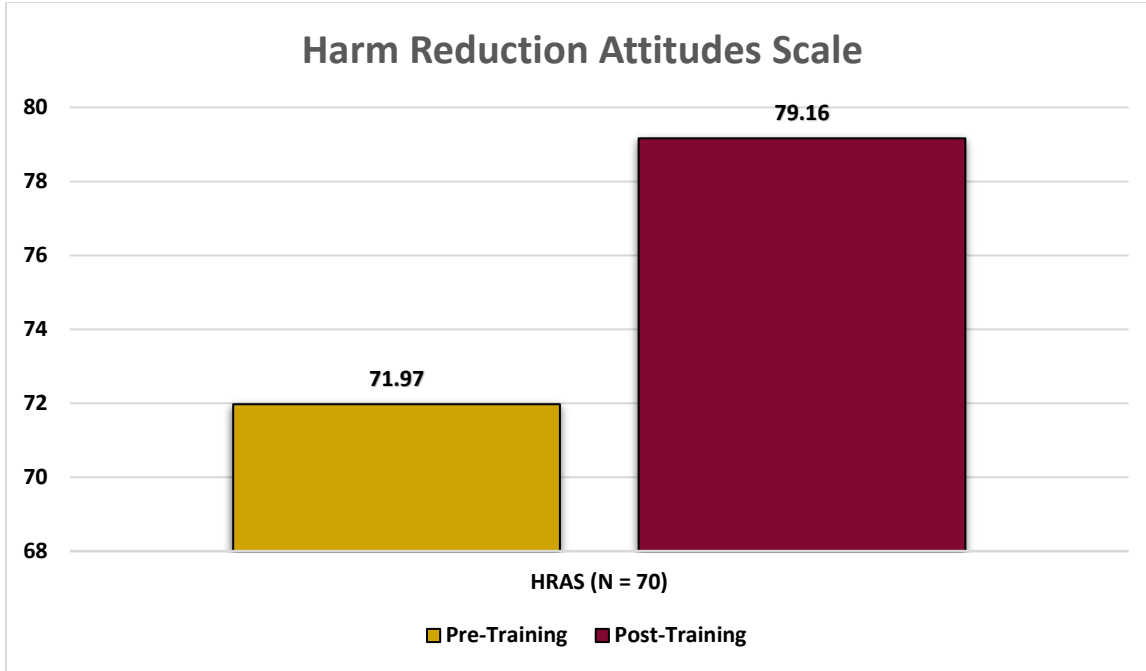
From a sample of 70 attendees who completed the Harm Reduction Attitudes Scale (HRAS) portions on both the pre- and post- training surveys, we found that the overall attitudes towards harm reduction strategies showed a statistically significant increase after the sessions.

The HRAS consists of 22 questions in total with ordinal responses measured on a Likert scale, with a maximum positive attitude score of 110. These responses were coded as a range from 1(Completely Disagree) to 5 (Completely Agree). Results from a paired samples t-test showed that there was a statistically significant increase in attendees’ attitudes towards harm reduction as measured on the HRAS, by an average increase of 7.19 points (a mean score of 71.97 on the pre-training; a mean score of 79.16 on the post-training; $p \leq .001$).

Summary of Analyses

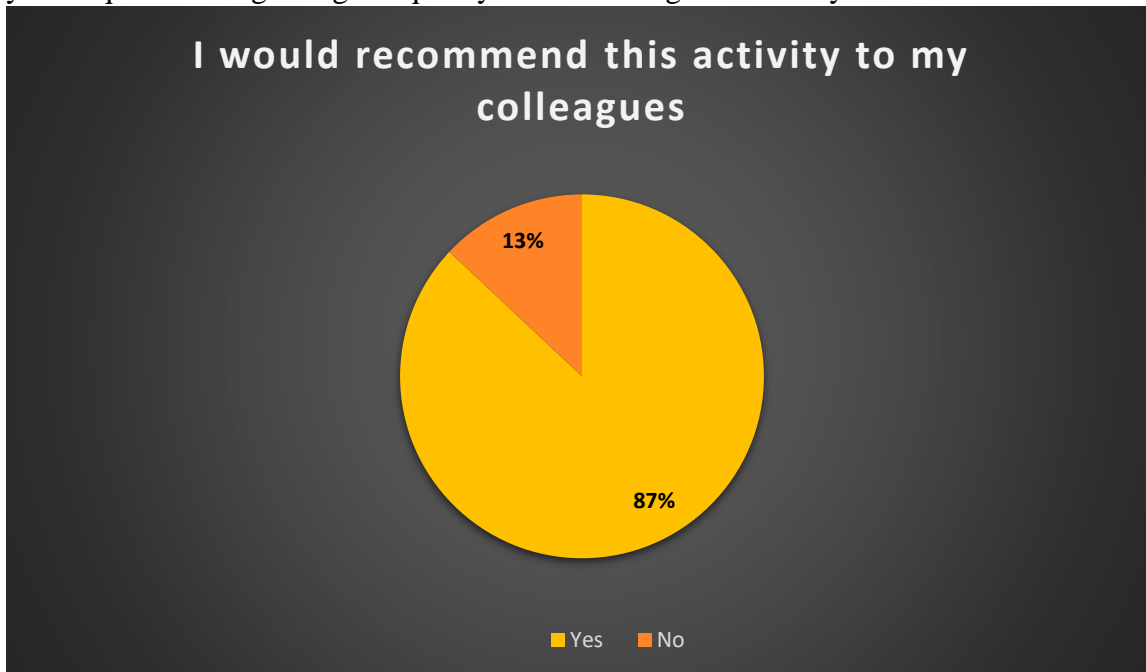
To sum, we have found that the attendees who completed the scale portions of the surveys showed a marked improvement based on the metrics we use to gauge increase. Both knowledge of opioids and responses to overdoses, as well as attitudes towards harm reduction more generally, improved significantly after the training sessions.



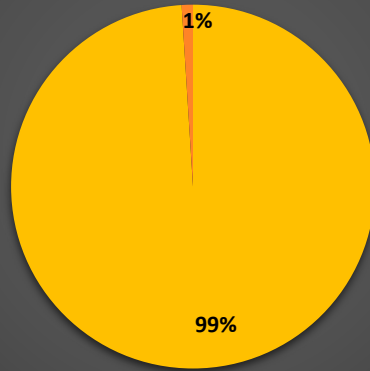


Training Session Feedback Results

The proceeding descriptive figures show how Goal 1 attendees responded to several broad yes/no questions regarding the quality of the training session they attended.

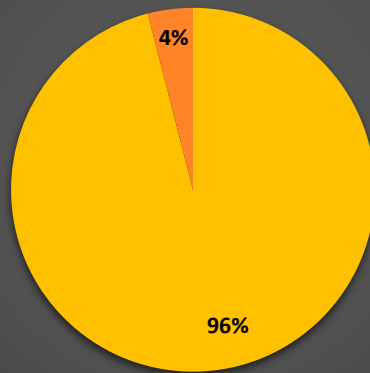


True or False: I can assist those seeking treatment to local treatment centers



■ Yes ■ No

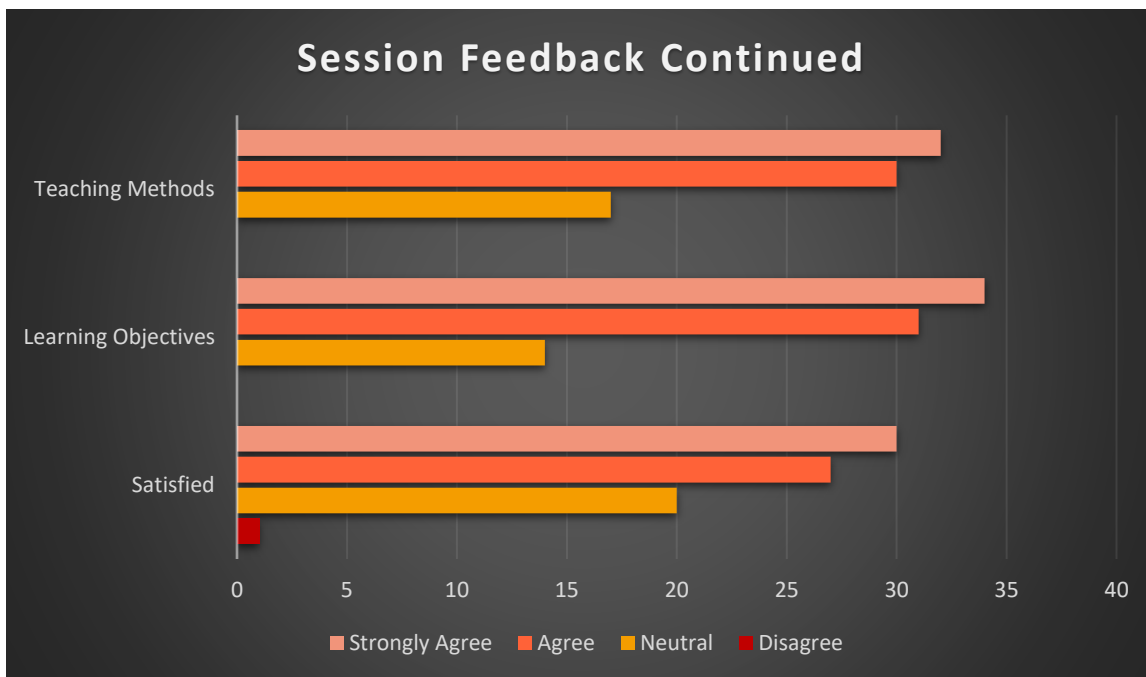
Was the time spent participating in this activity appropriate?



■ Yes ■ No



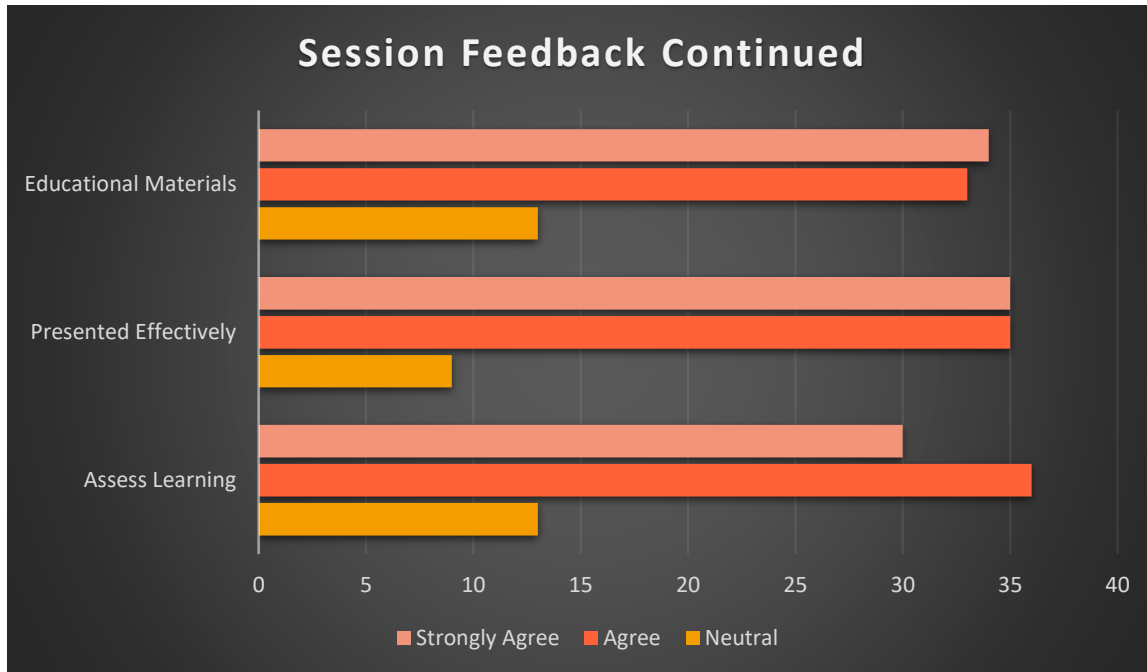
Below are summary figures showing Goal 1 attendees’ attitudes towards specific aspects of the training sessions they attended; possible responses ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree (no responses recorded for Strongly Disagree, and this category was therefore omitted from the figure).



1. Teaching methods were effective

2. Activity met the stated learning objectives

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

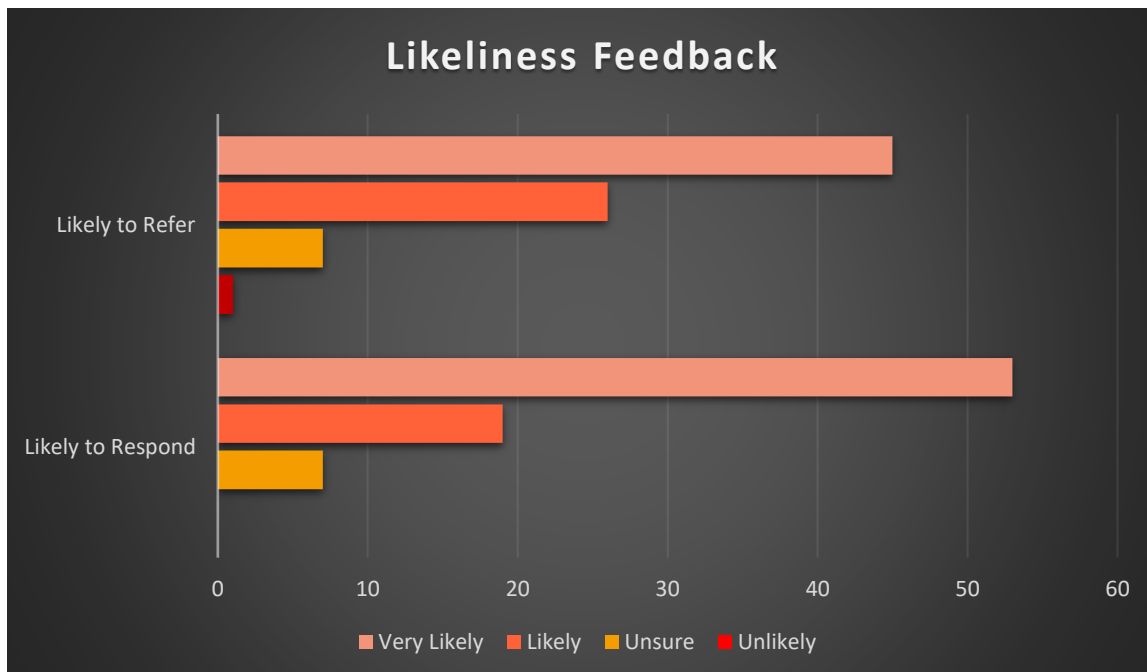


4. Educational materials were useful and of high quality

5. The faculty presented effectively

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

Finally, the two questions below gauge Goal 1 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, and this category was therefore omitted from the figure).



Summary of Activities for Year 2, Quarter 3

As previously mentioned, our activities this quarter have related mostly to laying the foundation of connections that we can build on going forward through our outreach efforts. We have increased our outreach efforts, including making connections in parishes in our catchment where we had not previously.

This quarter has been more active compared to last, as we have made progress across all three of our goals, most importantly on our first responders goal. In total, we held 11 events: 7 Goal #1 events, 3 Goal #2 events, and 1 Goal #3 events. Notably among these, we were able to hold training sessions for the entire New Orleans Harbor and Slidell Police Departments. Finally, we have well surpassed our overall target number for the year in a way that we believe will be replicable for the next few years of the grant.

We were also, with the help of Shane Bellard, a member of our community advisory board, able to have our training program get accredited by the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services. For EMS workers who need continuing education hours to maintain their licenses, our program will now be available to count for 2 C.E. hours, which they can sign up for over the BEMS website. We believe that this will greatly increase both our reach and interest in our program.

Ongoing Challenges

Below we have summarized our ongoing challenges, as well as what steps we have taken this quarter to address said challenges:

- **Outreach and Messaging:** We focused on increased outreach throughout our catchment this quarter, using approaches including face-to-face meetings, writing letters to legislators, and were even offered the opportunities in local publications.
- **Incentives:** We have begun offering additional incentives to attendees, specifically at our Goal 1 sessions which includes providing meals for all attendees, as well as the aforementioned 2 continuing education hours for EMS workers who attend, in order to be able to more effectively market the benefits of our training.
- **Technical Updates:** We have made some updates to our website that allows anyone who visits to be able to see what community events we will be attending in the future, as well as a link to an online contact form that can be submitted in case anyone would like to work with us on future events.

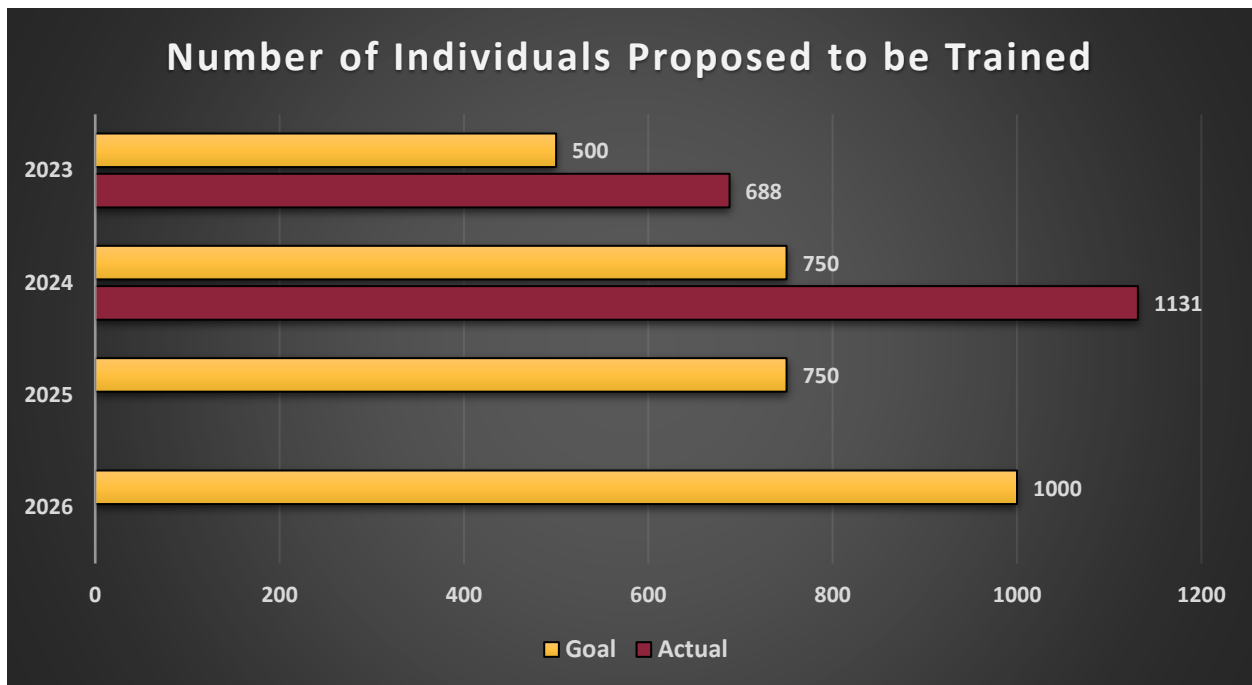
Among our challenges, first, while this quarter has been quite successful in gaining attention from first responder organizations, we would like to continue to focus on Goal 1 outcomes as our primary focus going forward. However, we believe that the main obstacle to this goal now is more of an outreach issue, rather than an interest or messaging issue. We believe that our program offers enough incentives to prospective organizations that there should be sufficient interest once we make connections with them. As a result, we have focused a great deal on outreach, especially in person meetings this quarter, to organizations in our catchment. We believe that doing this groundwork now will pay off later.

Lastly, we are still working towards having higher survey completion rates from our sessions, as the findings from these surveys can lead to insightful conclusions that will help inform our approach for future sessions. We found that for many first responder organizations we interacted with this quarter, we had better response rates from providing physical surveys in person during the sessions. We will likely continue this approach, together with other approaches which we will continue to look into, at future sessions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this quarter saw a marked improvement across all of our goal numbers, as well as a milestone in hitting an all-time overall yearly high in total individuals trained, as the figure below shows. We also managed to gather useful data on our goal 1 sessions which have so far yielded promising results, and have gotten useful feedback from attendees which we can use for quality improvement in the future.

Our outreach efforts, thanks to the work of our new outreach coordinator have begun to pay off as we have made many new contacts with first responder organizations which we believe will lead to more training sessions. We will continue to work closely with these organizations to help prepare their workers for opioid overdose reversals. We have also managed to meet our previous challenges with new approaches. For the duration of the year, we will continue our focus on our goal 1 target of reach 2,000 first responders by the end of the grant, and to recreate the successes that we have had in this quarter.



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.