



**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 second quarter of the third year of activity (April - June 2025). 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.)

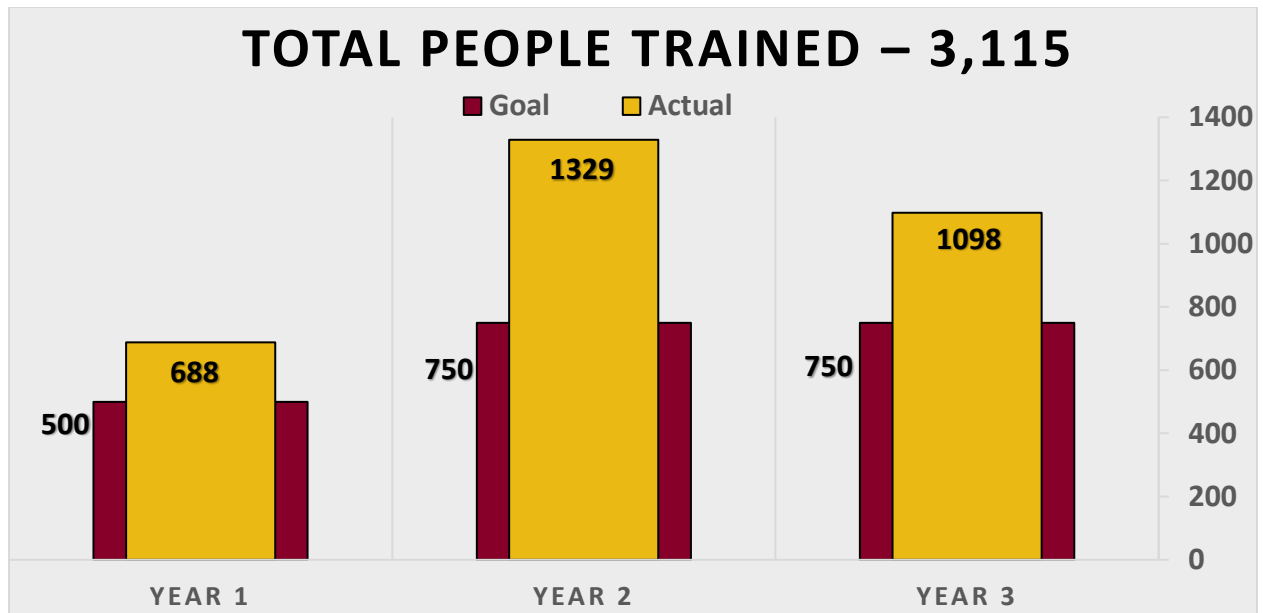
***Goal 2: Community Members*** (attendees of community events)

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

**Overall Totals**

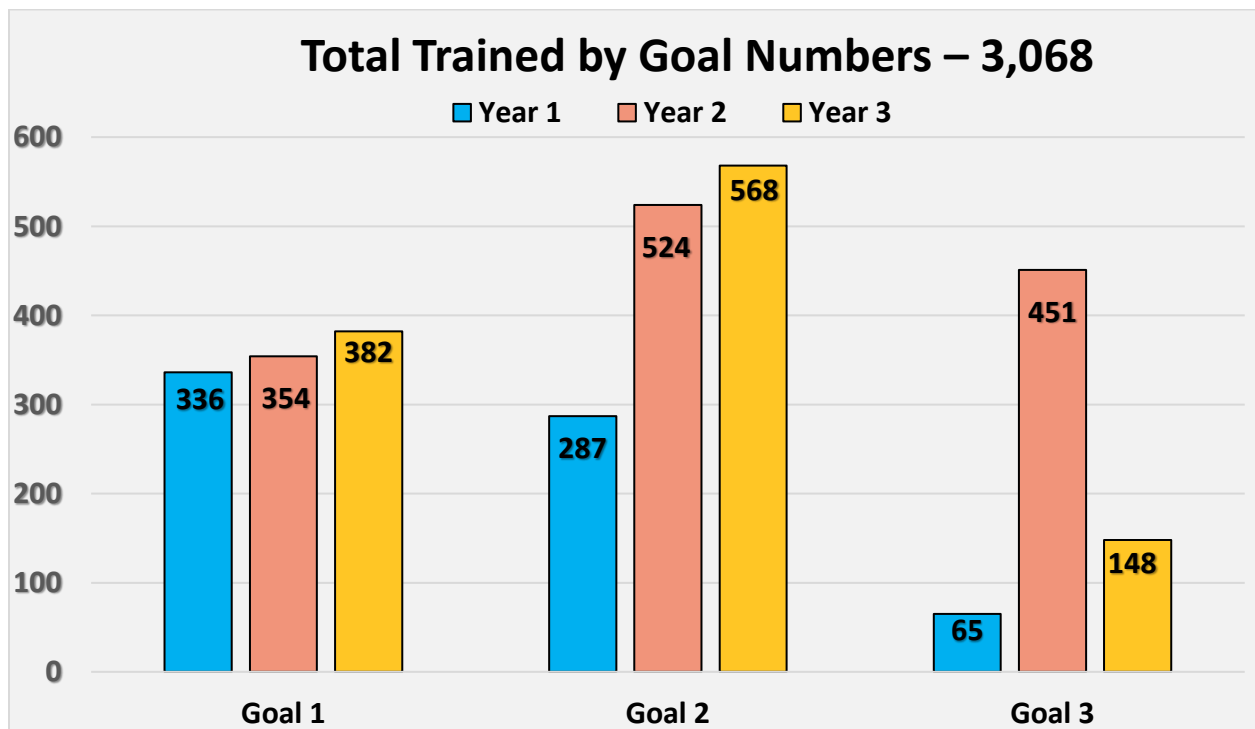
In the third quarter of our third year, the program has surpassed our yearly total goal of 750 total individuals, by a factor of 301 individuals. During this time, we have held sessions with organizations in our catchment including Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, Louisiana State Police, New Orleans Police Department, Gretna Police Department, and Harahan Fire Department. Additionally, we have held our first session with students from the Nursing program at Grambling State University. We have attended more community events in areas that are especially in need of access to naloxone. Finally, we have continued to follow up on previous efforts to build connections with organizations in our catchment that we believe will lead to further progress towards our goals. As the figure below shows, we have currently trained 3,068 individuals.

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.



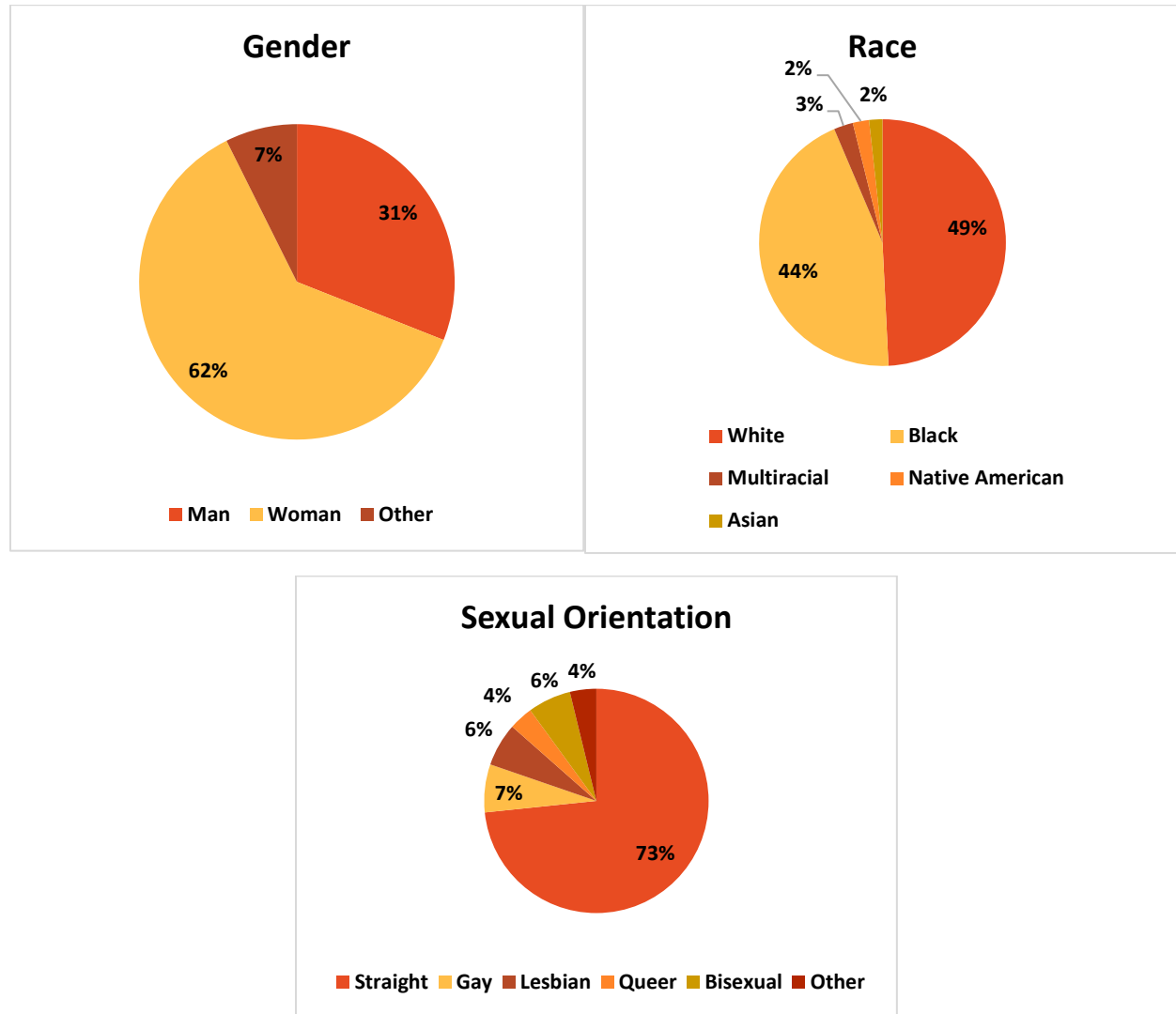
#### Breakdown by Goals

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 have seen an increase in growth in all three goals. Overall, our total for Goal 1 now stands at 1,025, Goal 2 is 1,379, and Goal 3 is 664.



For community events, we have trained 568 individuals this year alone, continuing our track record of high involvement in the communities in our catchment. This quarter, we attended

3 community events – The St. Bernard Crawfish Fest in Arabi, the New Orleans Sexual Health Block party in the lower 9<sup>th</sup> ward, and the Desire St. Community Day in New Orleans as well. Across both events we handed out over 200 kits. The demographic breakdown of attendees at our booth from community events this year so far is presented below.



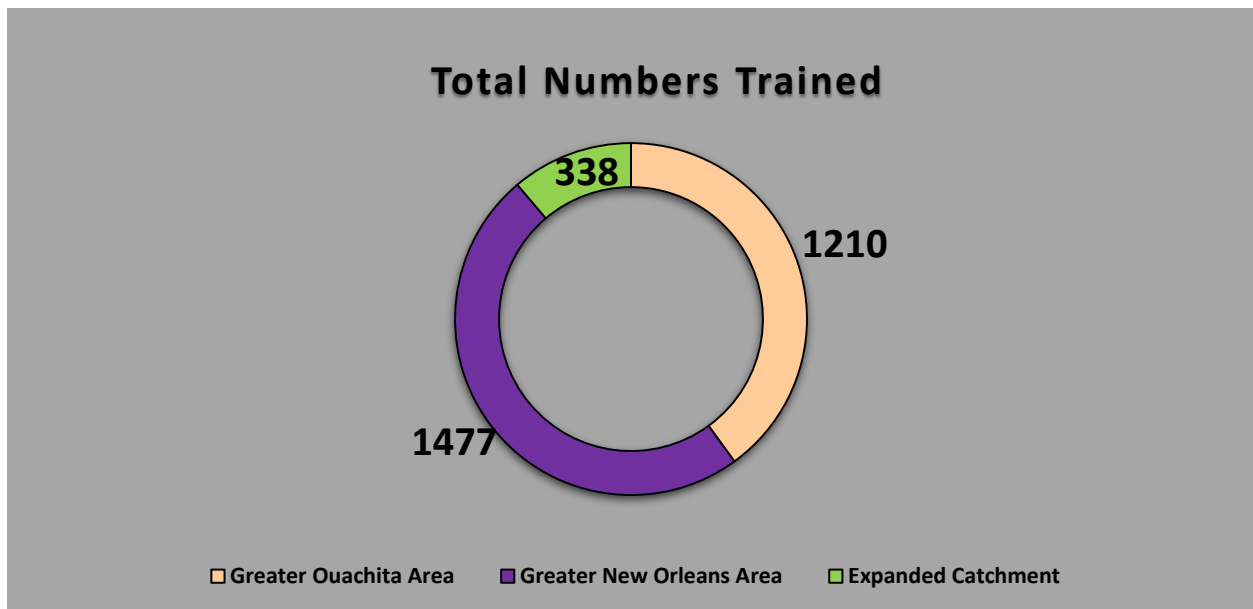
As for Goal 1, we have continued our focus of primarily reaching out to traditional first responder organization. As a result of this, we have had great success in holding sessions for these individuals in both major catchment areas. Among these have mainly been police and fire departments. We are also trying to make connections to EMS organizations to hold large scale trainings, but have had less success in doing so. Because of this, we will continue to focus on EMS organizations in particular.

As we have been focusing our efforts on our first goal in an attempt to continue to bolster our outreach to traditional first responders, we have not emphasized our student sessions as much as previous years. However, we were able to hold a session for Nursing students at Grambling State University, our first session with this university. We will also continue to network with

students in other university health programs across the state to set up more sessions once school is back after the summer months.

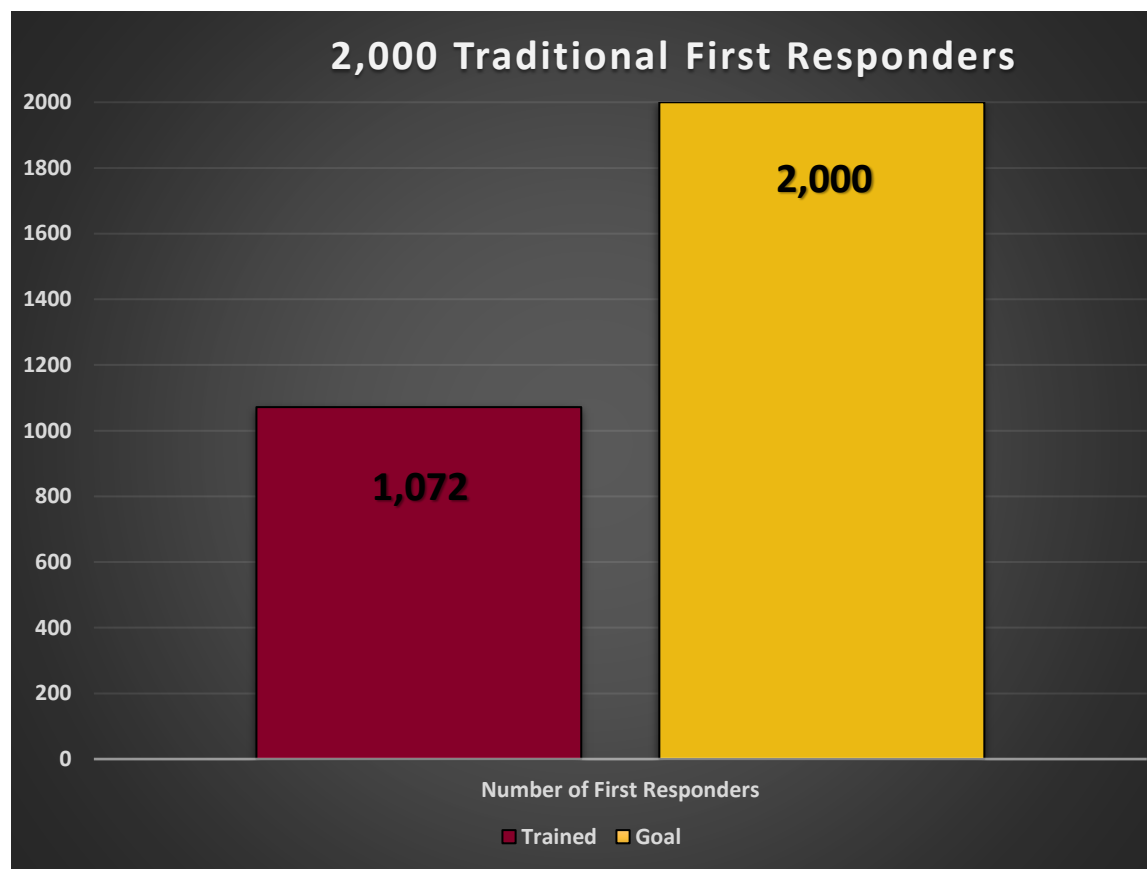
**Breakdown by Location**

We have continued our outreach efforts in the parishes of our original catchment, as well as the parishes in our recently expanded catchment. In the greater New Orleans area we have seen continued successes in both Goals 1 and 2, and in the Ouachita parish area surrounding Monroe we have seen the same. This quarter, we have been especially active holding sessions in the New Orleans area for both community events and traditional first responders. The program totals by area are in the figure below.



**Goal #1: Traditional First Responders**

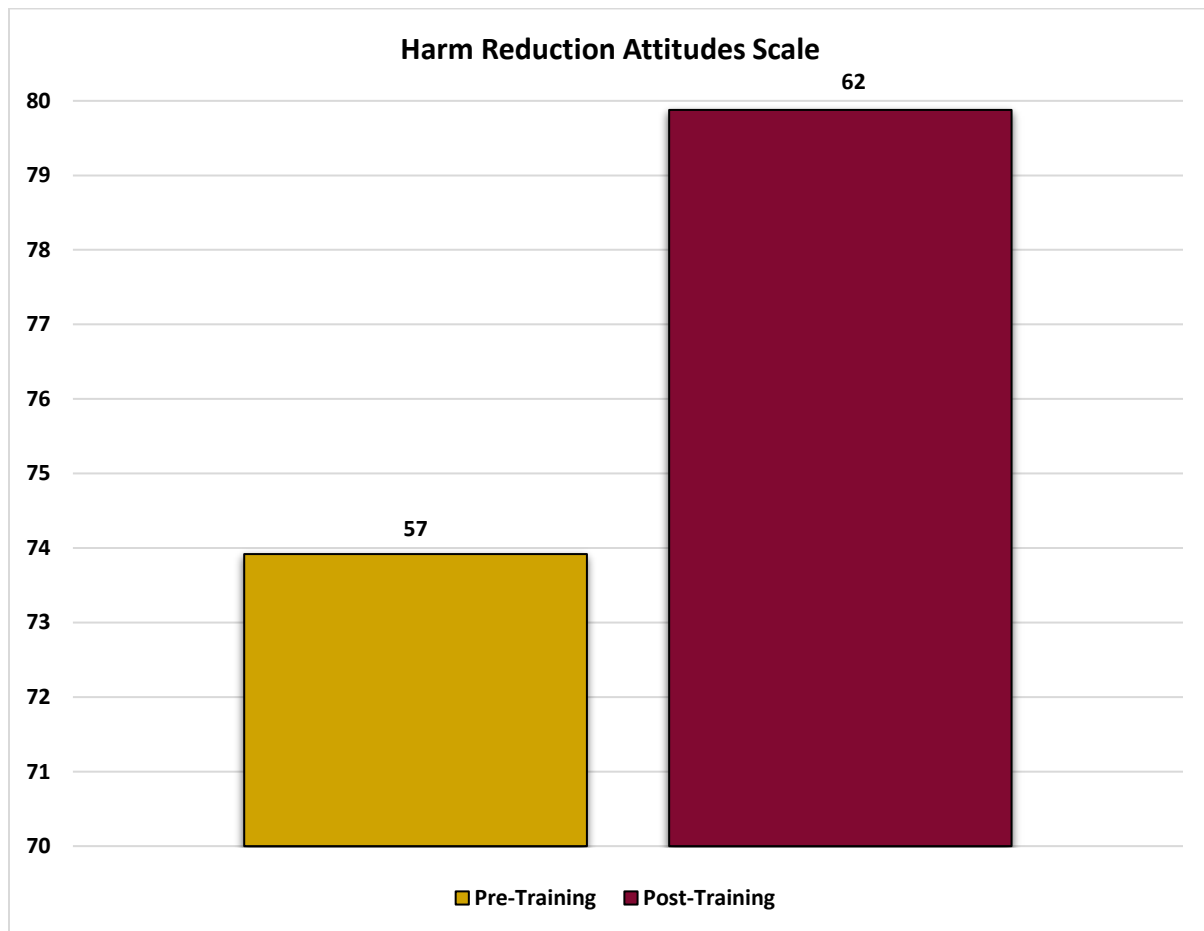
As mentioned, our primary focus going forward continues to be to increase our outreach to traditional first responder organizations. From the beginning of the grant, our target has been to reach 2,000 first responders for the entirety of the grant. As of this quarter, we have surpassed the half-way point with 51% of the goal reached.



We have trained 1,025 individuals in total, with 139 of these in this quarter alone. We have continued to gather vital attitude and knowledge data from attendees using our pre- and post-training surveys. Because of this, we have some results to share from our recent training sessions from this past quarter:

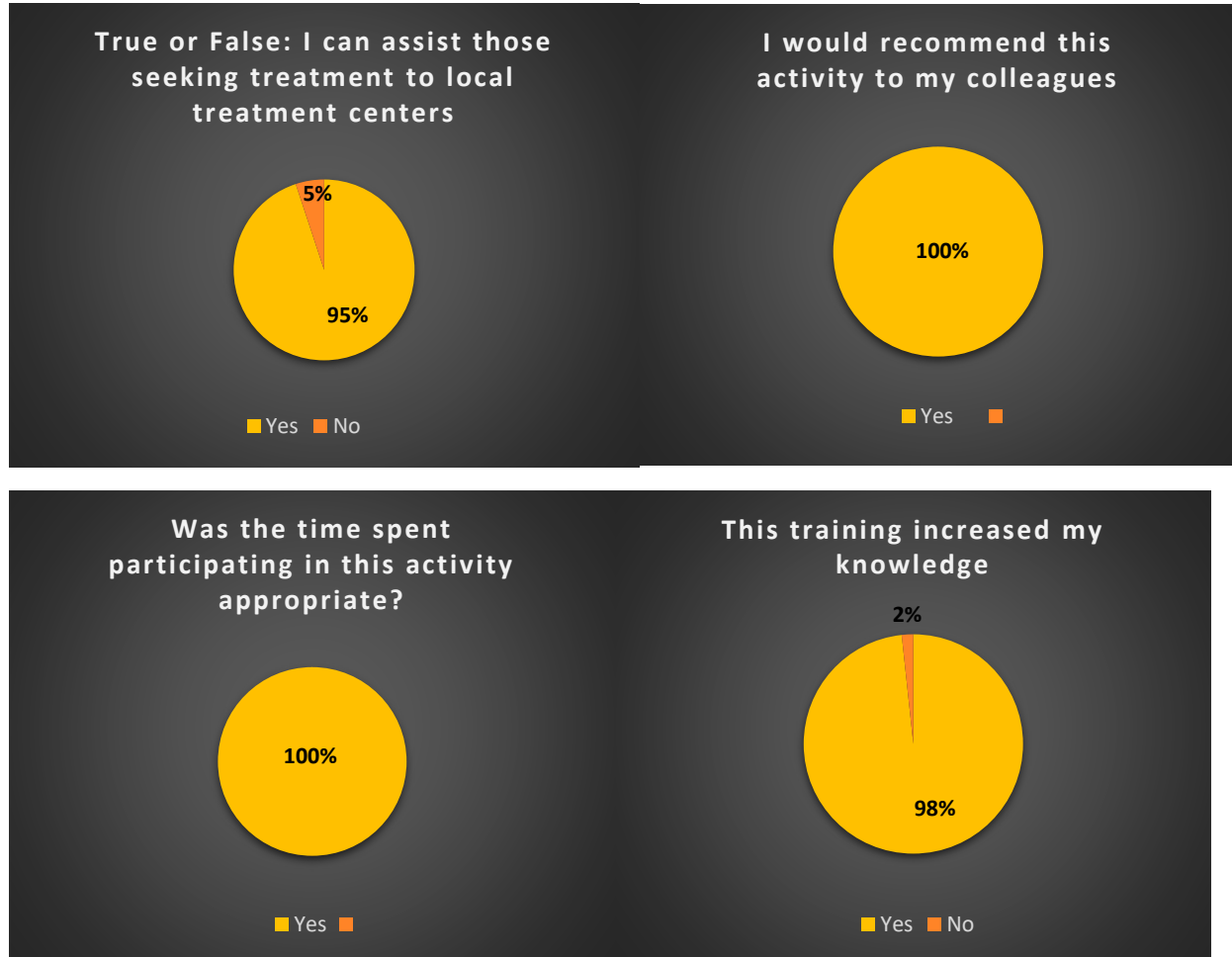
From a sample of 36 attendees who completed the Harm Reduction Attitudes Scale (HRAS) portions on both the pre- and post- training surveys, we found that the overall attitudes towards harm reduction strategies showed a statistically significant increase after the sessions. The HRAS consists of 16 questions in total with ordinal responses measured on a Likert scale, with a maximum positive attitude score of 80. 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 4.39 points (a mean score of 57 on the pre-training; a mean score of 62 on the post-training;  $p \leq .001$ ). Findings such as these continue to add support to our confidence in our ability to reach individuals who are on the front line of the

opioid crisis. Work on validating this scale for future academic use has been underway, and an article demonstrating the scale's reliability is currently under review. Current publications will be discussed below.

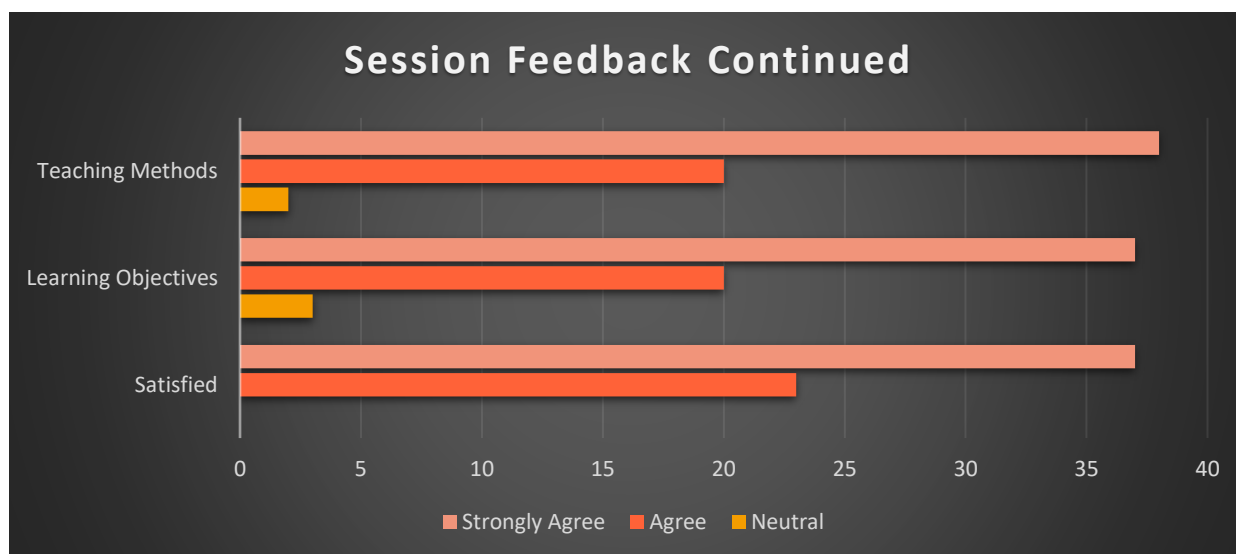


**Training Session Feedback Results**

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 from sessions over the past three months.



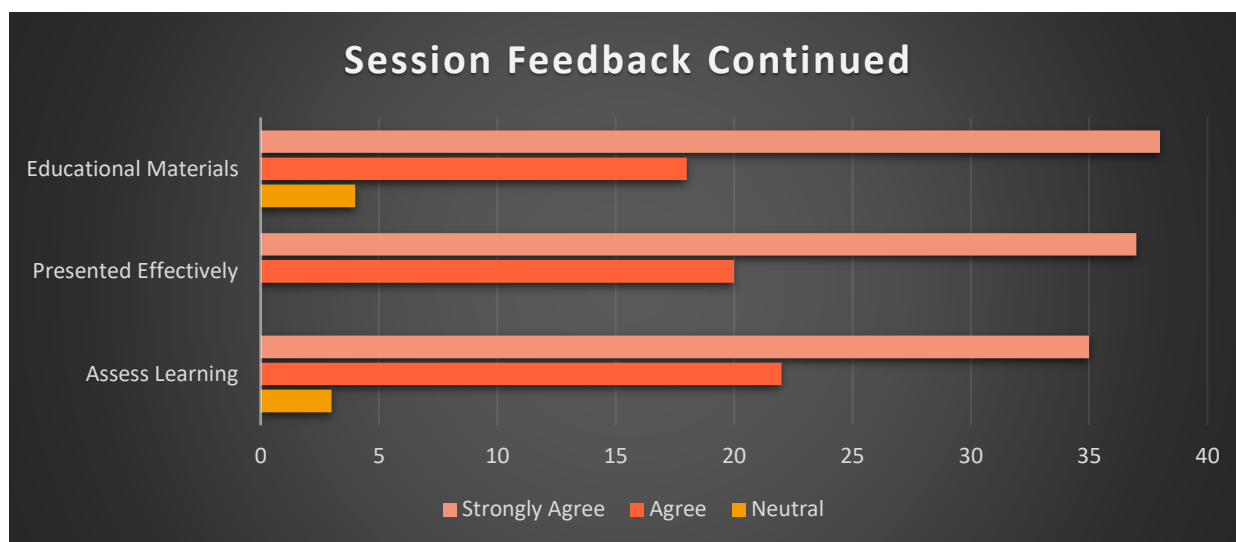
Below are summary figures showing Goal 1 attendees' attitudes towards specific aspects of the training sessions they attended; possible responses ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree (no responses recorded for Strongly Disagree, and this category was therefore omitted from the figure).



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

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

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



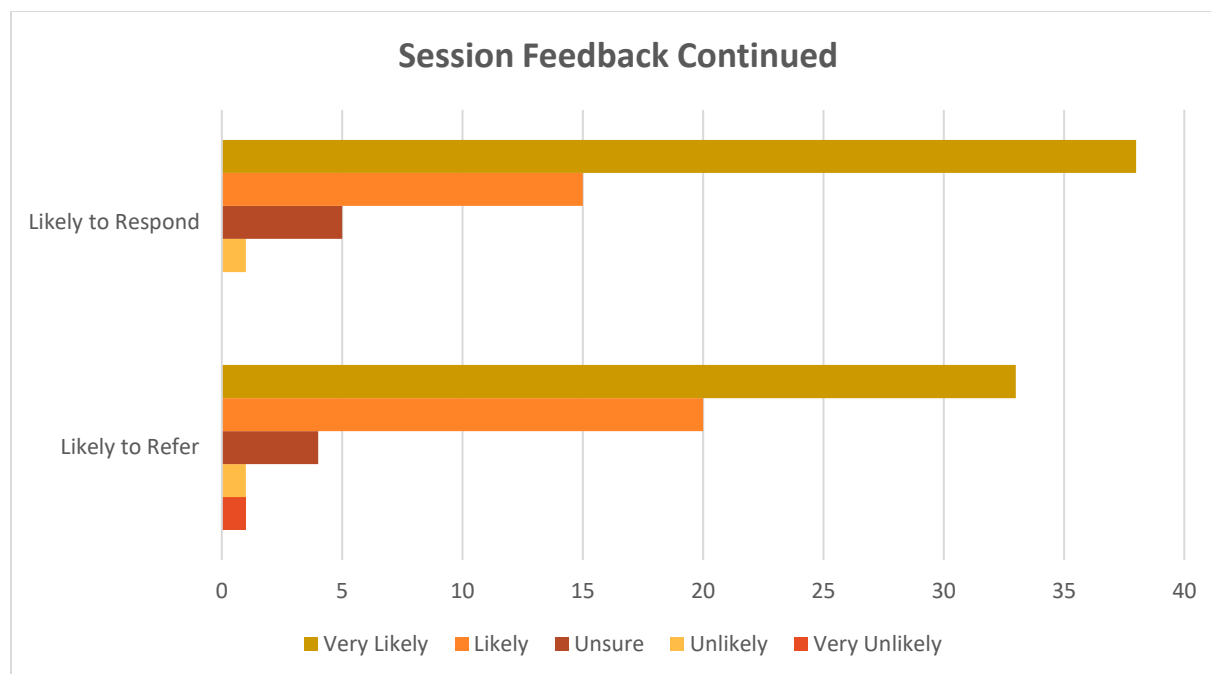
***4. Educational materials were useful and of high quality***

***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).





### **Publications**

This quarter our team has been at work getting multiple research projects into publication ready status and have even already had a paper published. This paper, “Assessing Knowledge and Beliefs in Harm Reduction Strategies Among Student Pharmacists: An Observational Pilot Study”, was accepted for publication in *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning* in April. This article explores the change in attitudes towards harm reduction and knowledge of opioid overdoses and how to treat them in pharmacy students.

We have also been working on submitting two articles for publication since then as well. One, the article that will validate the scale we created for measuring first responder attitudes towards harm reduction, the Harm Reduction Attitude Scale (HRAS), has just been submitted to *Drugs and Alcohol Reports*. The other article is being prepared now to be submitted to the *Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy (JACCP)*, which presents the Goal 1 data received from feedback on post-training surveys and previous experience with opioids from pre-training surveys from the past two years of activity.

### **Summary of Activities for Year 3, Quarter 3**

This past quarter has seen great improvements towards reaching our goals, with a renewed focus on our first goal. We have seen further connections made with first responders and reached into communities we have not yet been. We have managed to build upon last year’s efforts through the work of both of our outreach coordinators, who have taken extended outreach trips in their respective geographic areas to meet with people where they are, which has led to scheduling large-scale sessions with departments we have attempted to contact for years. We believe that through these efforts, we will continue to see great improvements in the next quarter, as many of these larger sessions will be conducted in the coming months. We believe that with

the incentives we have offered and the departments we have already worked with, we will see interest in our program grow.

### **Ongoing Challenges**

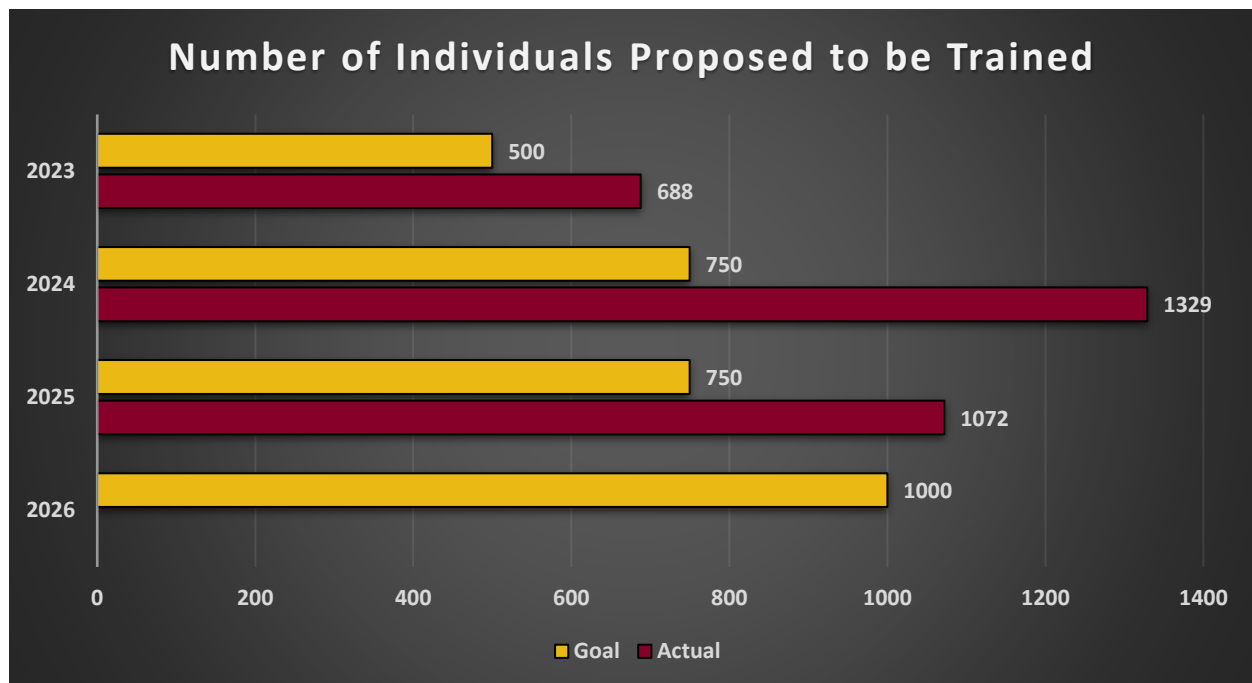
This year, we have continued to see the payoff of our outreach efforts, thanks to the work of both of our outreach coordinators. We have finally been able to work with large organizations such as Monroe Police Department, New Orleans Police Department, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office and Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office, all of which we have been attempting to schedule sessions with since the start of the program.

We have also begun to see further improvements in outreach to our expanded catchment parishes for Goals 1 and 3 as well. Despite these great successes, we do not want to remain idle, and aim to continue to emphasize outreach to traditional first responders, and to overcome our primary challenge which is getting more attention on our program. We believe that as we continue to create partnerships with large first responder organizations such as those previously mentioned, that it will provide further future opportunities as we continue to have positive feedback to show for.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this quarter saw improvements towards reaching our primary goal, as well as further success in reaching the general public as well as students. We have also continued to gather important data on our goal 1 sessions which have yielded promising results pointing to our success in informing first responders on opioid overdose management, and improving overall attitudes towards harm reduction approaches to dealing with opioid use disorder and reducing the stigma of substance use disorders. Additionally, we have been active in publishing and presenting findings, as well as working towards further publications in the near future.

Our outreach efforts are starting to pay off and have led to further opportunities that we will continue to pursue in the following months. We have already surpassed our overall yearly goal and will continue to increase our outreach across all three goals for the remainder of this 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.