



DATE: May 20, 2022
TO: Worcester Board of Health
FROM: Karyn E. Clark, Director
RE: **WBOH Meeting/ WebEx Meeting Minutes May 16, 2022**

Welcome & Introductions

Meeting called to order at 6:35 PM

Members Present: Jerry Gurwitz, MD, Chair, Gary Rosen, Khanh-Van Tran, MD

Members Absent: Chareese Allen, Frances Anthes

Staff Present: Karyn Clark, Director of Public Health; Matilde Castiel, MD, Commissioner for Health and Human Services; Brendan Keenan, Chief of Community Health; Amelia Houghton, Chief Public Health Nurse; Michael Hirsh, MD, Medical Director; Matthew Moore, Communications Specialist; **Guests Present:** Brandon Marshall, PhD, Associate Professor in Epidemiology at School of Public Health at Brown University; Jim Stewart, Shelter Director, Cambridge, MA and Founder and Committee member of Safe Injection Facilities for Massachusetts Now; Julia Newhall, Director for Substance Use Disorder and Homeless Initiatives, City of Revere; Laura Hutchinson, Program Director at a Peer Recovery Center in Whitinsville; Rebecca Zwicker; Chris Alba; Athena Haddon, MOAR

Review and Discussion of BOH Chair Appointment

- Congratulations to Jerry Gurwitz for being appointed by City Manager Augustus to Chairman of the Board of Health until the end of Jerry's term (12.31.22). Jerry recommends having a discussion at the next meeting about having a Vice Chair, especially should the Chair be unavailable.

Approval of the Minutes from WBOH Meeting from April 4, 2022

- Meeting minutes not available. Deferred approval to June Meeting.

Presentation and Discussion on Supervised Consumption Sites

- Brandon Marshall presents 'An Overview of Supervised Consumption Sites'
 - Discusses Overdose deaths, many due to Fentanyl
 - More than 100 Worcester residents died of an opioid-related overdose in 2020
 - What is a Supervised Consumption Site? They are spaces where drug users can consume *pre-obtained* controlled substances under the supervision of trained staff. This can be nurses or a trained peers who can intervene should an overdose occur.
 - They almost always come with wrap around services such as medical care and other support services, and referrals to treatment and recovery programs. One of the primary goals is to connect people to healthcare, other social support services, housing programs, and treatment and recovery.
 - More than 120 of these sites are operating in more than 12 countries; the first opened in Switzerland in the 1980s, and the first in North America in Vancouver, Canada in 2003

- Other terms- Harm Reduction Centers, Overdose Prevention Sites
- 1st two sanctioned sites opened in East Harlem and Washington Heights in New York at the end of 2021. To date, these two sites have reversed over 280 overdoses, more than 1,100 singular clients have visited over 17,000 times, which shows the need and demand for these programs.
- No fatal overdoses inside any site in the world. Significant reduction in emergency department visits due to overdose.
- Post consumption room- substance use counselors and peer trained specialists to speak with people regarding health or social service needs.
- A study began in Vancouver to see the reduction of overdosing rates at a community level- 2 year period - vast majority that use the facility reside within 500 yards. Compared the before and after overdose rates of that area within the immediate vicinity of the OCS with the rates of Vancouver overall. Immediate vicinity decreased by 35% and 9% for the city overall.
- 2011 study of the likelihood of entering into some form of treatment- of 621 not in treatment, more than 40% of those people entered into some form of treatment after 2 years of follow-up. Follow-up studies show many of these individuals entered long term treatment, recovery, and some ceased injection drug use altogether.
- Other models, such as mobile facilities, imbedded facilities (located in an existing doctor's office or hospital)
- Examples of legal barriers- Trump Administration sued an organization in Philadelphia that was hoping to open a supervised consumption site
- Rhode Island passed a law that authorizes supervised consumption site on the state level, signed in July 2021
- Gary Rosen - people attribute a lot of the deaths to overdose, but it seems that many of these deaths are caused by Fentanyl being in the product. So why are we focusing on overdose prevention when we should be preventing Fentanyl from getting into the product? Brandon informs that many of the sites have machines that can test the product, as well as handing out Fentanyl test strips. Confirms that individuals bring and use previously obtained substances. Products are not immediately tested, but they are asked what they will be using so that staff can be prepared for overdose reversal. No global numbers on prevented overdoses at this time. Controlled Substances Act makes the Supervised Consumption Sites illegal. To Brandon's knowledge, Federal government hasn't interfered with states that have opened SCSs. Questions how the neighborhoods where the sites would be located may be affected, but Brandon informs that the areas (in New York specifically) have seen much improvement with the sites opening and businesses supported the sites. Evaluations are planned to take place. How would this be implemented, who's final decision? Dr. Castiel informs that BOH would have a say, city council, would require city approval.
- Dr. Khanh-Van Tran - supports the initiative. Would like to know how it is tied in with addiction treatment. Brandon informs that in some areas they co-locate treatment programs with the SCSs. Also having a strong referral pathway to licensed treatment facilities. Where is Providence at with opening the sites? Brandon informs that cost effectiveness studies show that the sites save dollars by preventing emergency department visits and admissions, as well as preventing by injection related conditions which can be expensive to treat. Finding funding.
- Dr. Matilde Castiel s- starts off sharing how far the City of Worcester has come over the years beginning with syringe exchange. This is another form of harm reduction. Narcan is given to every person fighting addiction.

- Dr. Jerry Gurwitz- have you studied what characteristics do the communities or cities predict or associate with having a site; what's special about the places that have a site? Brandon states that advocacy from the community was critical in Vancouver as well as explaining the need and purpose for the facilities to policy makers and community members.

Review and Discussion of COVID-19 Updates

- Dr. Hirsh presents COVID updates
 - We are in a surge, but we are better equipped medically and as a community. We have oral antivirals, home testing, and masks.
 - Last week, wastewater numbers, hospital numbers, and case numbers all going up. Community was alerted.
 - Variants BA-4 and BA-5 (from South America, very vaccine elusive and highly transmissible), BA-2 BA-2.12.1
 - The best we can do is to point out the value of masks, point out high risk who can use them the most. Advisable to wear masks in crowded indoor situations.
 - Based on UK numbers, will see a recession of numbers at the end of May beginning of June.
 - Vaccination rate is stuck at 63%; booster rate is at 49%; estimated 51% of the country has been exposed to COVID and is carrying immunity because they actually had the disease (native immunity). Unvaccinated populations will be a breeding ground for variants.
- Dr. Tran - appreciates the freedom of choice and the best we can do is provide residents with information and allow them to make their own choices. Main concern is immune profile. Need for constant boosters, do people with innate immunity still need the boosters. Keep moving forward
- Gary Rosen - works a lot at Senior Center and reports how it's taken a toll on the seniors. With the warmer weather is here, what type of effect might we see? Dr. Hirsh informed that he thinks it'll be a good effect to hasten the recession of current variants. Late fall is predicted to be the next big surge. Predicts these advisories to happen seasonally. Dr. Tran questions if handing out permission slips for vaccines is allowed. Dr. Hirsh informs that Dr. Castiel has been working with the schools on that.

Next Meeting/ Topics

- COVID-19 Updates
- Recommendation of a Vice Chair

Next Meeting June 6, 2022

Meeting Adjourns at 8:00 p.m.

An Overview of Supervised Consumption Sites

Worcester Board of Health

May 16th, 2022



people
place &
health
collective



BROWN
School of Public Health

Brandon DL Marshall, PhD

Founding Director
People, Place & Health Collective
Associate Professor of Epidemiology
Brown University School of Public Health

Disclosures

I have received funding to conduct research from the National Institutes of Health, Arnold Ventures, and the Cigna Foundation

I serve as an expert witness in the state of Rhode Island's lawsuit against opioid manufacturers

I am an expert member of the Governor's overdose prevention and intervention task force

I am an *ad hoc* member of the FDA's drug safety and risk management advisory committee



The United States is in the midst of an unprecedented overdose crisis



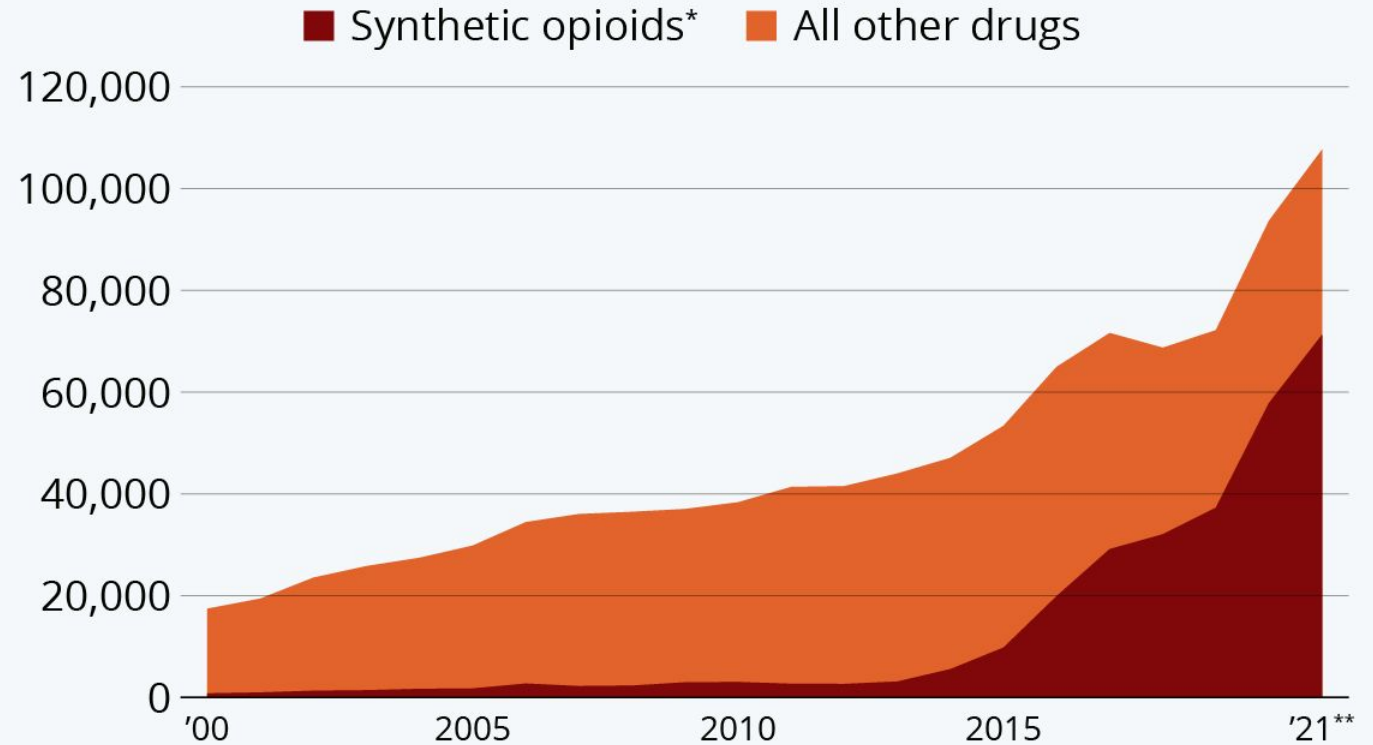
people place & health collective



BROWN School of Public Health

Fentanyl Fuels Surge in U.S. Drug Overdose Deaths

Number of drug overdose deaths in the U.S., by drug class



* mostly fentanyl, excl. methadone

** estimates for 2021 are based on provisional data.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

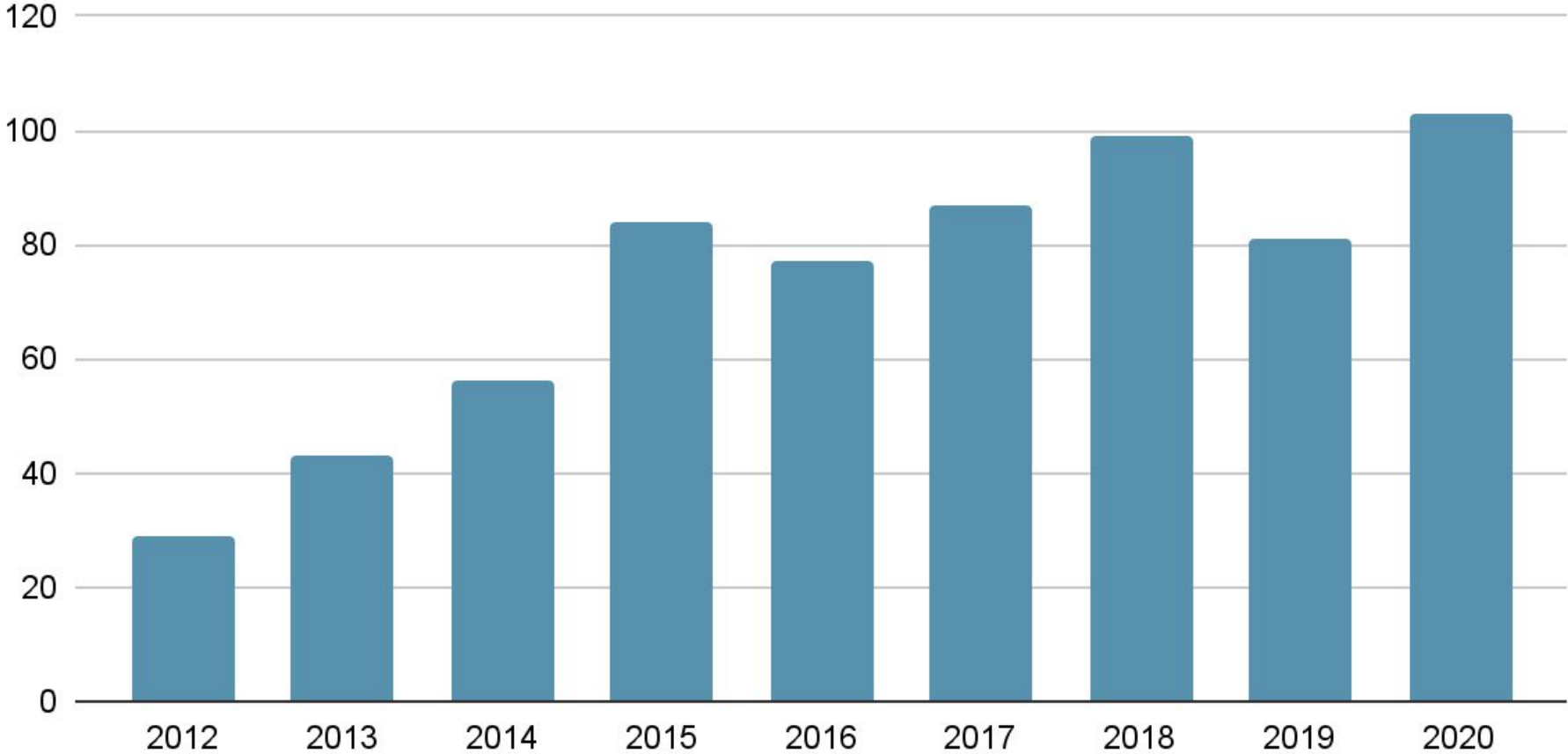


Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

Source: <https://www.statista.com/chart/18744/the-number-of-drug-overdose-deaths-in-the-us/>

More than 100 Worcester residents died of an opioid-related overdose in 2020

Number of Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths among Worcester Residents



Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HIV outbreak in Lawrence, Lowell is bigger than officials thought

By Felice J. Freyer Globe Staff, Updated July 26, 2018, 1:02 a.m.



State health officials confirm cluster of 7 new HIV cases in Boston

Health officials struggle to contain Boston HIV outbreak

By Felice J. Freyer Globe Staff, Updated April 20, 2021, 2:56 p.m.



What are supervised consumption sites (SCSs)?

Space where people who use drugs can consume *pre-obtained* controlled substances under the supervision of trained staff

Clients can access medical care and other support services, including referrals to treatment programs

There are more than 120 SCS operating in 12 countries

Terminology: also known as supervised injection facilities, harm reduction centers, or overdose prevention sites (OPS)





WELCOME TO


insite



OPEN DAILY

10:00AM - 4:00AM

Front door closes at 3:15 am daily

Ph: 604.OUR.SITE



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**Does an OPC reduce
community overdose
rates?**

Reduction in overdose mortality after the opening of North America's first medically supervised safer injecting facility: a retrospective population-based study



Brandon D L Marshall, M-J Milloy, Evan Wood, Julio S G Montaner, Thomas Kerr

Summary

Background Overdose from illicit drugs is a leading cause of premature mortality in North America. Internationally, more than 65 supervised injecting facilities (SIFs), where drug users can inject pre-obtained illicit drugs, have been opened as part of various strategies to reduce the harms associated with drug use. We sought to determine whether the opening of an SIF in Vancouver, BC, Canada, was associated with a reduction in overdose mortality.

Methods We examined population-based overdose mortality rates for the period before (Jan 1, 2001, to Sept 20, 2003) and after (Sept 21, 2003, to Dec 31, 2005) the opening of the Vancouver SIF. The location of death was determined from provincial coroner records. We compared overdose fatality rates within an a priori specified 500 m radius of the SIF and for the rest of the city.

Findings Of 290 decedents, 229 (79.0%) were male, and the median age at death was 40 years (IQR 32–48 years). A third (89, 30.7%) of deaths occurred in city blocks within 500 m of the SIF. The fatal overdose rate in this area decreased by 35.0% after the opening of the SIF, from 253.8 to 165.1 deaths per 100 000 person-years ($p=0.048$). By contrast, during the same period, the fatal overdose rate in the rest of the city decreased by only 9.3%, from 7.6 to 6.9 deaths per 100 000 person-years ($p=0.490$). There was a significant interaction of rate differences across strata ($p=0.049$).

Interpretation SIFs should be considered where injection drug use is prevalent, particularly in areas with high densities of overdose.

Funding Vancouver Coastal Health, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research.

Lancet 2011; 377: 1429–37

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April 18, 2011

DOI:10.1016/S0140-6736(10)62353-7

See [Comment](#) page 1385

British Columbia Centre
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Key Result

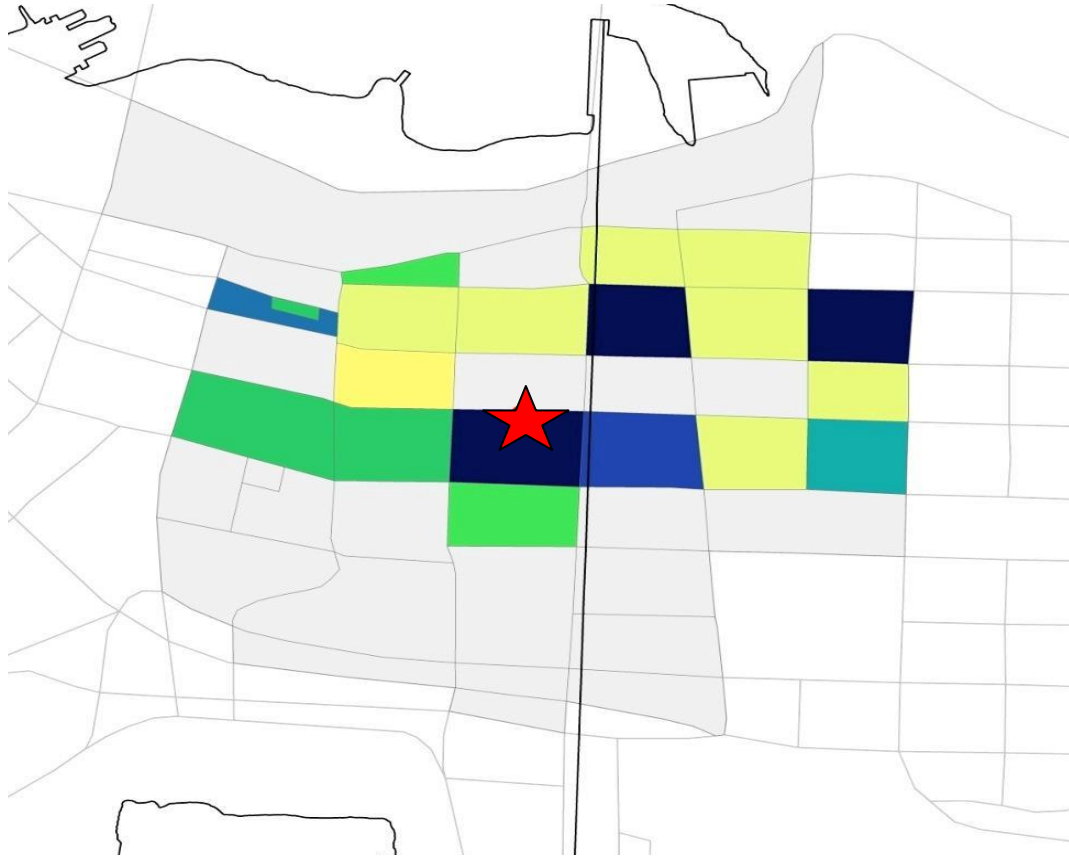
Overdose deaths **decreased by 35%** in the neighborhood immediately surrounding Insite, compared to only 9% in the rest of the city of Vancouver



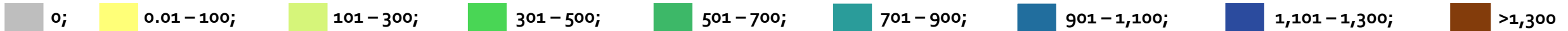
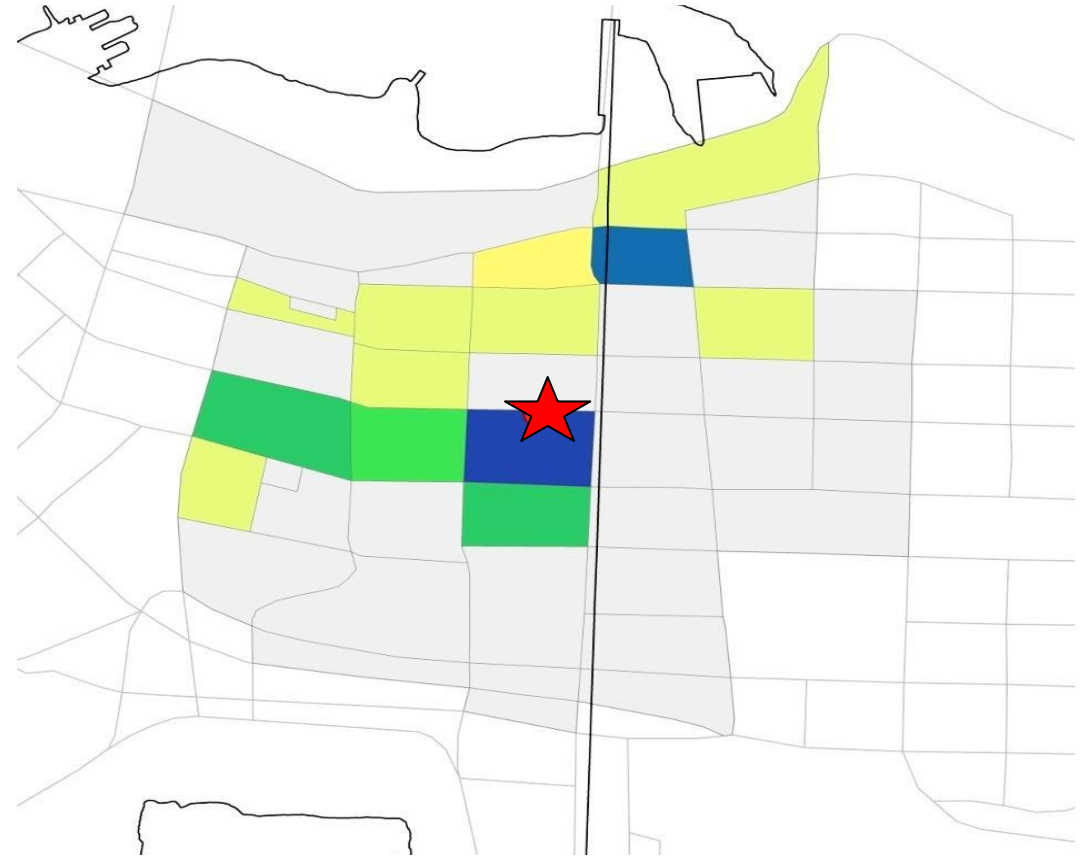
Results

Fatal OD rates (per 100,000 person-years) before and after the opening of the SCS

Pre-SIF: Jan 1, 2001 – Sep 20, 2003



Post-SIF: Sep 21, 2003 – Dec 31, 2005





**Does an OPC help
people enter treatment?**



Of the 621 participants not in treatment at baseline, 261 (42%) enrolled in some form of treatment after 24 months of follow-up

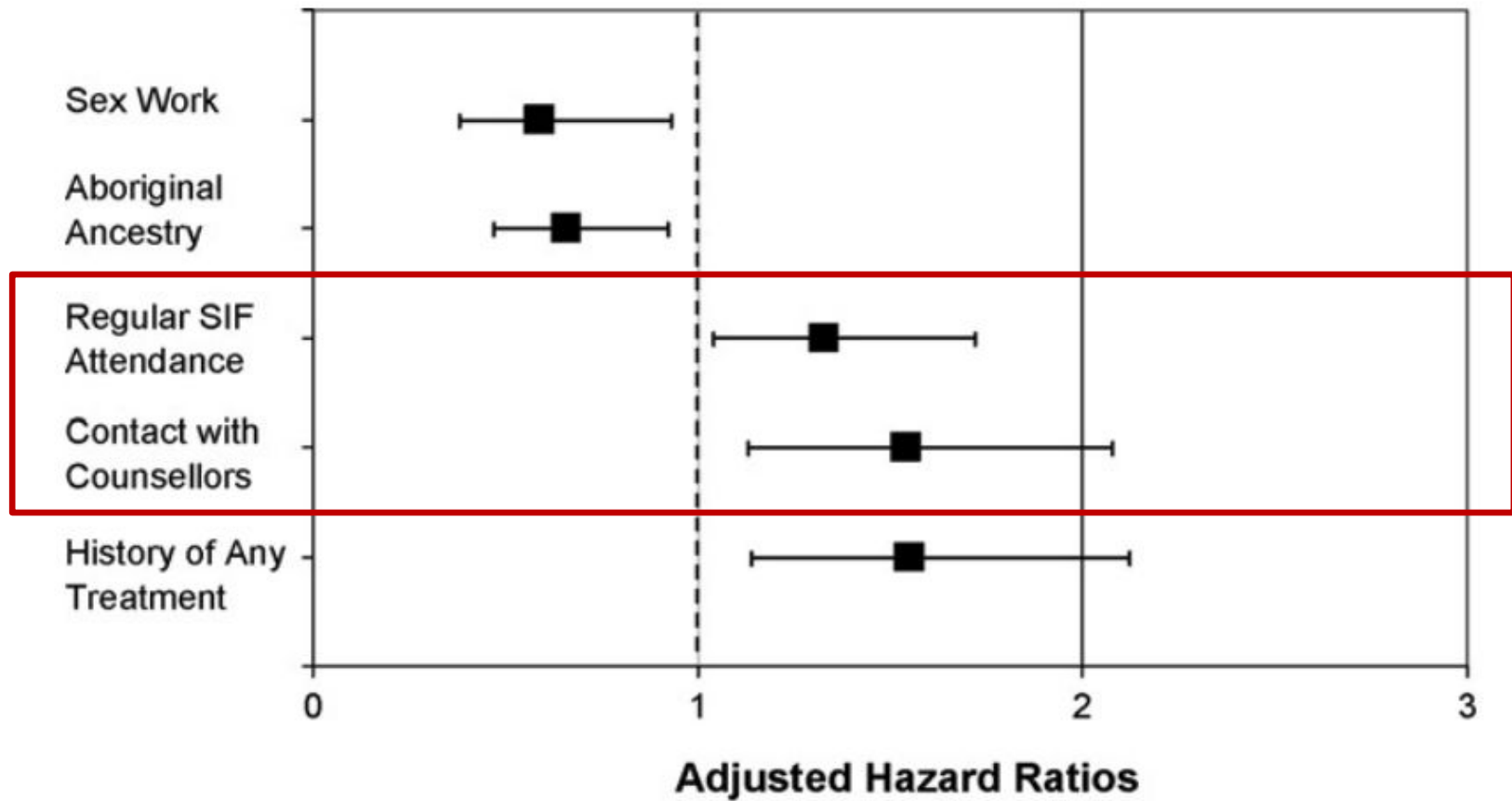


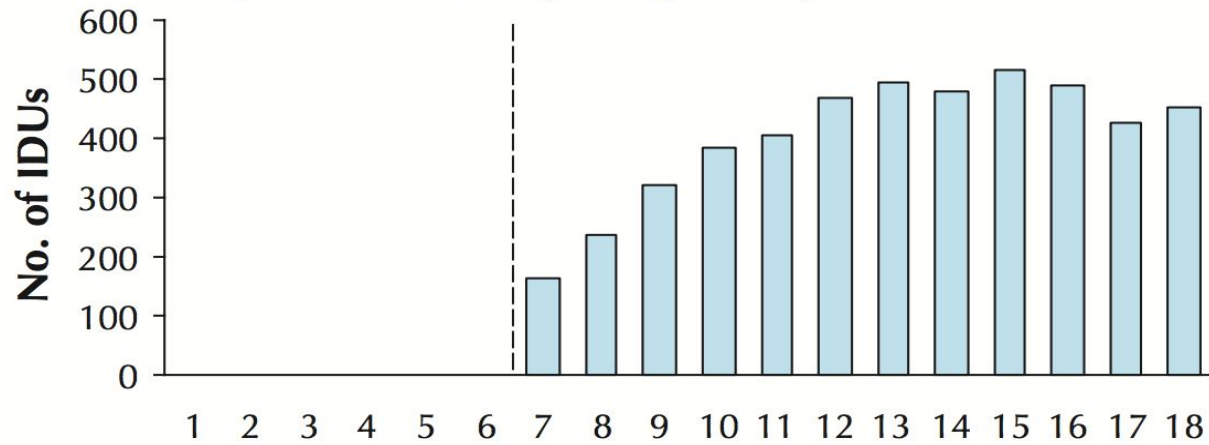
Figure 1. Factors associated with time to enrolment in addiction treatment among clients of Vancouver’s supervised injection facility. *Notes:* ‘Regular SIF Attendance’ was measured at baseline and defined as visiting the SIF at least once per week vs. visiting the SIF less than once per week; ‘Contact with Counsellors’ refers to meeting with an addictions counselor at the SIF and was measured through data linkage to the SIF administrative database; ‘History of Any Treatment’ was defined as any history of engaging in any type of addiction treatment programs.



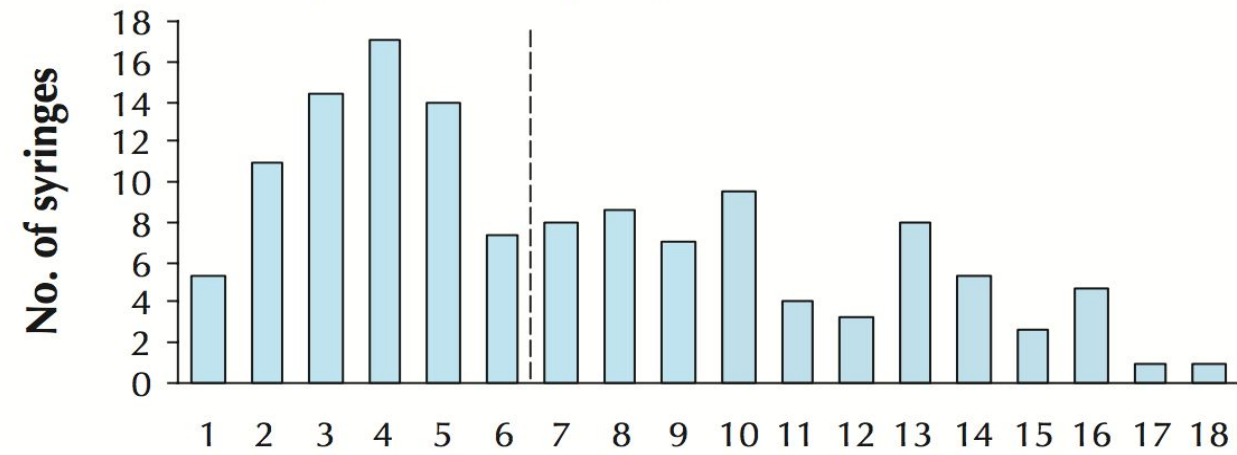
**Does an SCS have an
impact on public
disorder and crime?**

SCSs reduce public injection drug use and injection-related litter

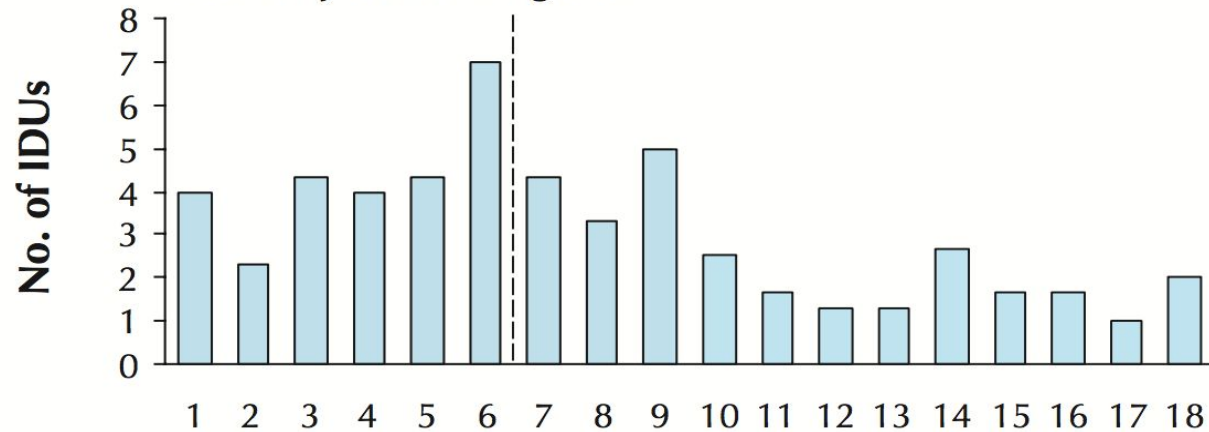
Daily use of safer injecting facility



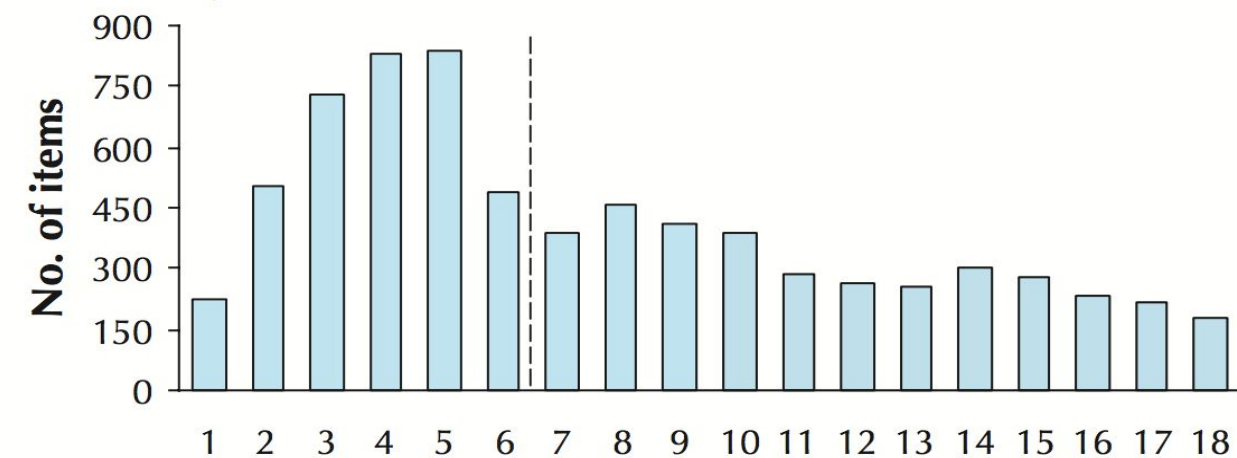
Publicly discarded syringes



Public injection drug use



Injection-related litter





Mobile and embedded supervised consumption facilities in Canada

Barriers & solutions to implementation in the US

1. History of punitive, racialized approaches to address drug-related problems in this country



Barriers & solutions to implementation in the US

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2. False narratives and poor public understanding of substance use disorders



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2. False narratives and poor public understanding of substance use disorders
3. Myths that supervised consumption sites increase drug use, crime, or public disorders



Barriers & solutions to implementation in the US

1. History of punitive, racialized approaches to address drug-related problems in this country
2. False narratives and poor public understanding of substance use disorders
3. Myths that supervised consumption sites increase drug use, crime, or public disorders
4. Legal barriers



Acknowledgements

Study participants for their countless contributions to the research

The wonderful staff, faculty, and students at the People, Place & Health Collective (PPHC), particularly Alex Collins and Abdullah Shihipar

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people
place &
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Worcester COVID-19 Case & Wastewater Data

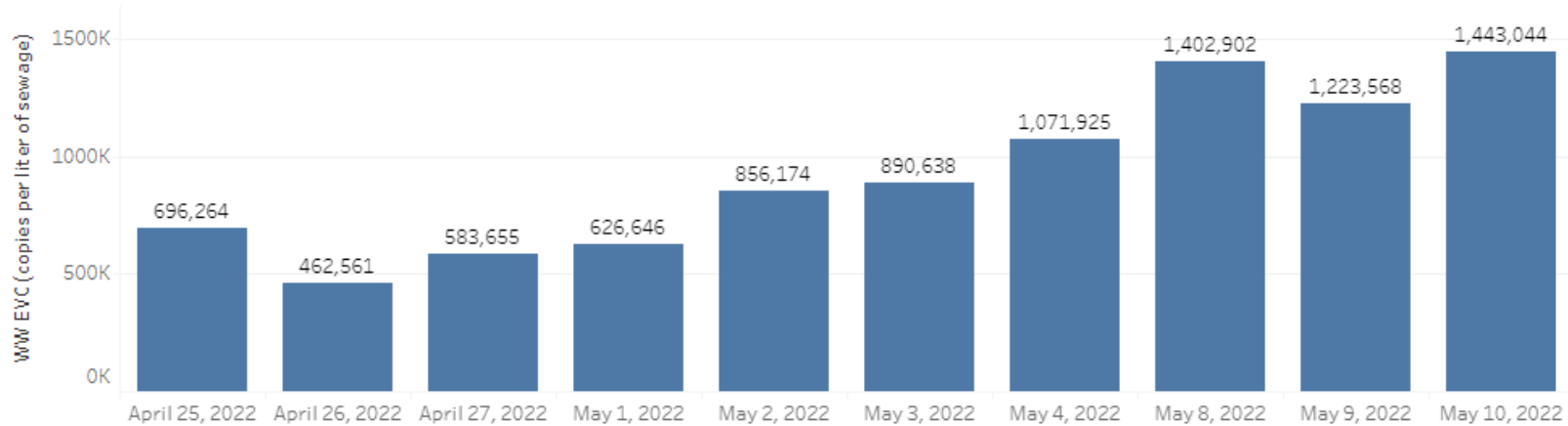
Case Info

Worcester Cases to Date	56,854
New Cases This Week	902
New Cases Last Week	595
7-Day Daily Average	128.86
Percent Positivity Last Two Weeks	3.62%

7-Day Daily Average



Greater Worcester Wastewater

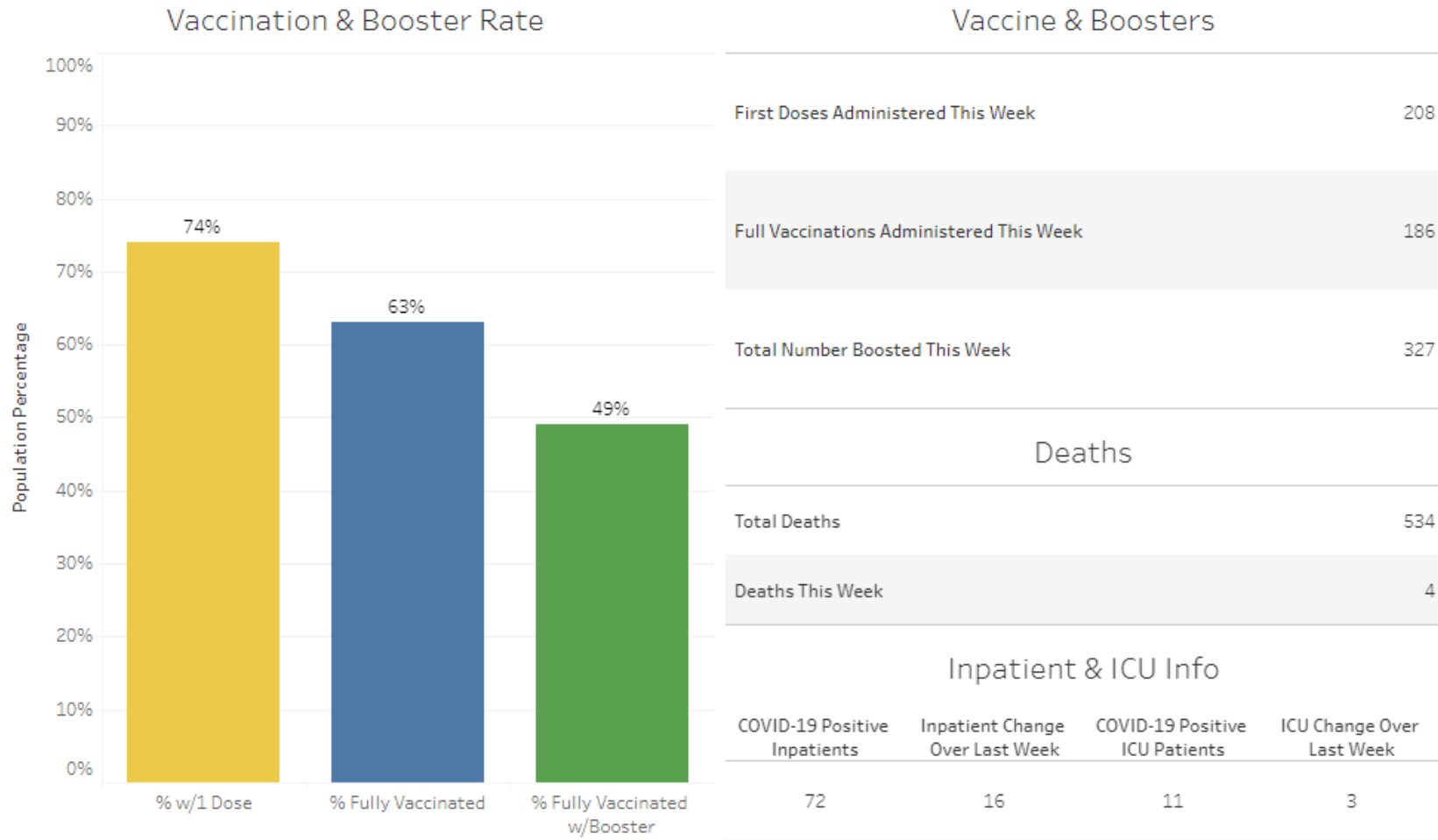


[Click for Worcester Vaccine, Death, and Hospital Data](#)

Case data provided by Massachusetts Department of Health. Wastewater data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Biobot Analytics, and the Upper Blackstone Clean Water treatment plant, which serves the greater Worcester area. Chart depicts effective SARS-CoV-2 virus concentration (EVC), which is raw virus concentration adjusted for dilution and other factors, in units of copies per liter of sewage. More information is available at <https://www.ubcleanwater.org/pretreatment/pages/covid-19-wastewater-monitoring>.

Last updated on May 13, 2022

Worcester COVID-19 Vaccination, Death, and Hospital Data



[Click for Worcester COVID-19 Case & Wastewater Data](#)

Vaccination data provided by Massachusetts Department of Health. Vaccination rates are calculated using Worcester's 2020 Census population of 206,518. Hospital data provided by St. Vincent's Hospital and UMass Memorial Health. Mortality data provided by Worcester Division of Public Health.

Last updated on May 13, 2022