



Harm Reduction and Clinton County

December 17, 2025
Board of Health

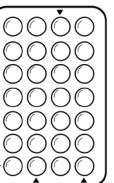
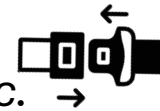


What is Harm Reduction?

Promotes health in a way that meets people where they are at and what they are capable and willing to do

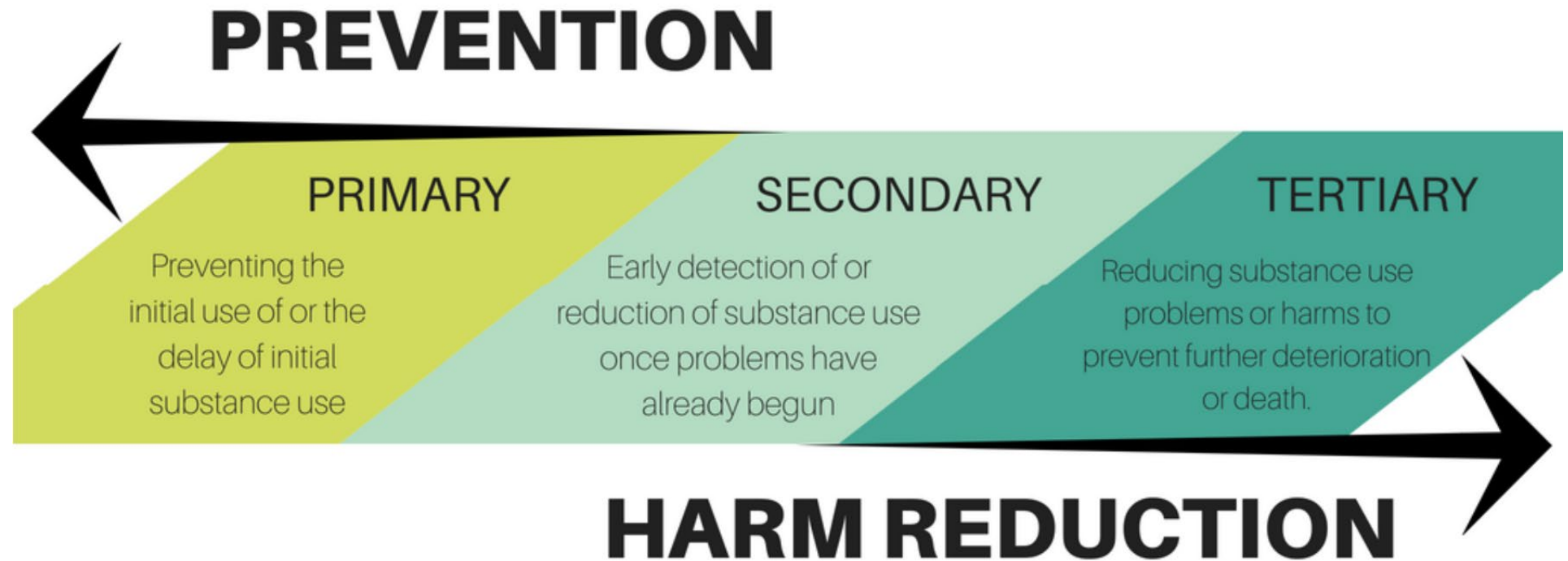
Examples:

- I want to ride a motorcycle/snowmobile/ATV though it may be dangerous.
 - *Wear a helmet, drive safely, drive on groomed trails, don't drink and drive, etc.*
- I need and want to drive places.
 - *Wear a seat belt, have and follow traffic laws, etc.*
- I want to smoke and I'm not ready/able to quit right now.
 - *Cigarettes are filtered, nicotine content is regulated, try to limit to 1 pack/day, nicotine replacement, screening for lung cancer, etc.*
- I want to go skiing.
 - *Take lessons, wear a helmet, ski within your abilities, etc.*
- I want to have sex.
 - *Use condoms, make sure your partner has been tested, get tested regularly, use birth control, etc.*



What is harm reduction with regards to drug use?

- Practical strategies and ideas aimed at decreasing the consequences of drug use.
- Recognize that behavior change is an *incremental process*
- Work against the stigmatization of substance use disorder
- Goals are to keep people alive and encourage positive change in their lives



CHANGE. AT YOUR OWN PACE.



CHANGE.

“I care about helping people who use drugs be safe.”

AT YOUR OWN PACE.

MICHIGAN DHHS **FIND NALOXONE NEAR YOU**
MICHIGAN.GOV/OPIOIDS



CHANGE.

AT YOUR OWN PACE.

“Using sterile syringes prevents Hepatitis C and HIV.”

MICHIGAN DHHS **FIND NALOXONE NEAR YOU**
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“Harm reduction services help people who use drugs prevent overdoses, HIV, and hepatitis C.”

CHANGE.

AT YOUR OWN PACE.

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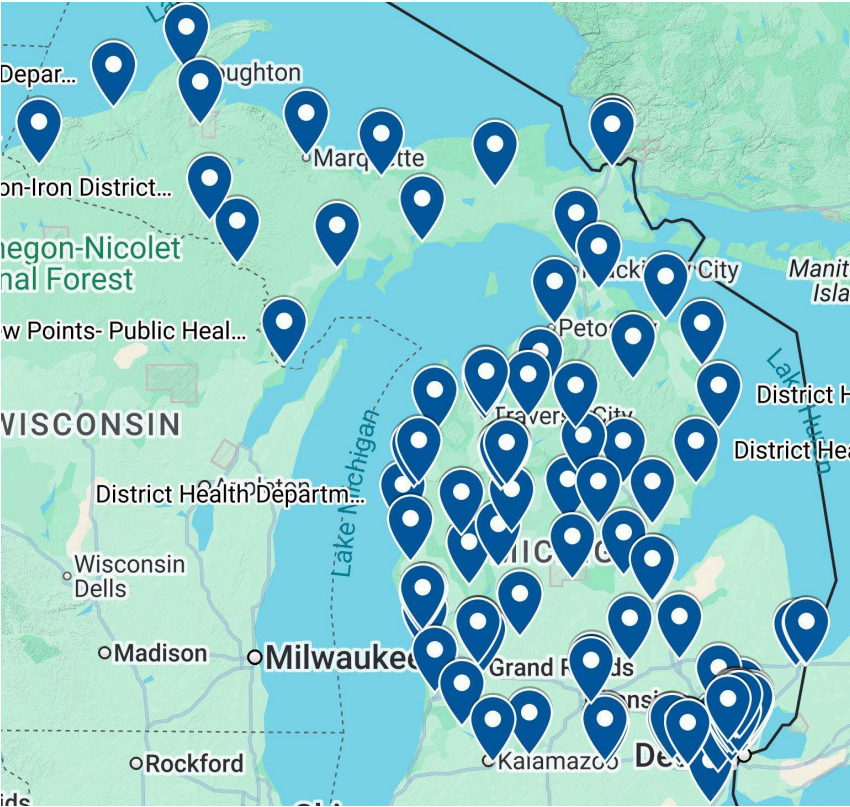
Some of the *Physical* Health Risks of Injection* Drug use

- Addiction/dependance
- Overdose/death
- HIV
- Hepatitis C, B, and A
- Hepatitis B
- MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staph aureus*)
- Other bacteria (such as *Staph*, *Strep*, *Pseudomonas*) causing skin, blood, heart infections
- Candida (yeast) infections
- Tetanus
- Wound botulism
- Tuberculosis

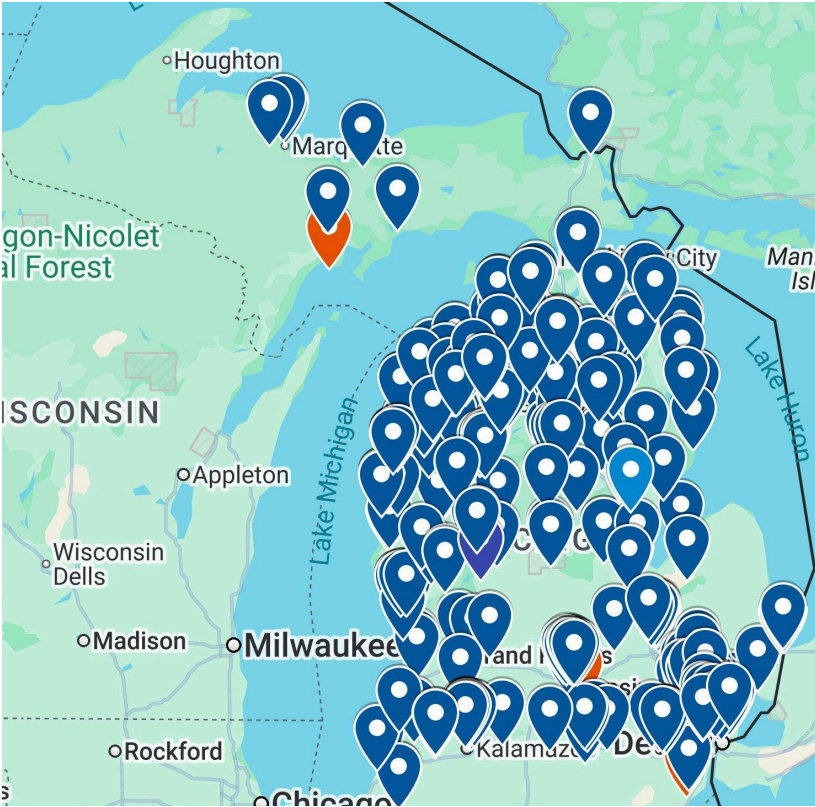
*Risks are not limited to injections; can also come from sharing pipes for smoking drugs, sharing other paraphernalia, and other factors associated with drug use

There are currently 141 SSP locations in Michigan and 452 Narcan vending machines

SSP Location



Narcan Vending Machine Location





A study of Connecticut police officers found that needlestick injuries were reduced by **two-thirds** after implementing SSPs.¹

After the implementation of a SSP in Portland, Oregon, research demonstrated a nearly

66% decrease



in the number of improperly discarded syringes.²

New HIV infections have declined by

80 percent

among persons who inject drugs since the implementation of SSPs in the late 1980s.³

Testing linked to HCV treatment can save an estimated

320,000 lives.⁴



SSP clients are 5 times

more likely to enter a drug treatment program than non-clients.⁵



1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7648290>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1560355>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/docs/fact-sheet-on-hiv-estimates.pdf>
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/risk/cdchiv-fs-syringe-services.pdf>
5. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11027894>



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Most importantly, SSPs have not shown to be associated with an increase in drug use

among persons who inject drugs since the implementation of SSPs in the late 1980s.³



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4. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/risk/cdchiv-fs-syringe-services.pdf>
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Clinton County Residents Use and Need Harm Reduction Agency (HRA) Services

- HRAs across the state report providing services to Clinton County residents that must resort to traveling to find help.
- Reports from HRAs indicate that Clinton County residents have traveled to Ingham, Genesee, Macomb, and Kent counties for lifesaving harm reduction services from 2022 to as recently as the most recent month of data (November 2025).
- It is likely that many are not able to travel and not able to receive these needed services

EMS-Attended Opioid Overdoses, All Drug Fatal Overdoses and All Drug Emergency Health Care Visits in Clinton County

Key Findings:

There have been over 100 EMS-attended overdoses reported in Clinton County each year from 2020-2024, over 100 ER visits for overdoses, and 7 to 12 fatal overdoses each of those years.

EMS-Attended Overdoses, 2020-2024

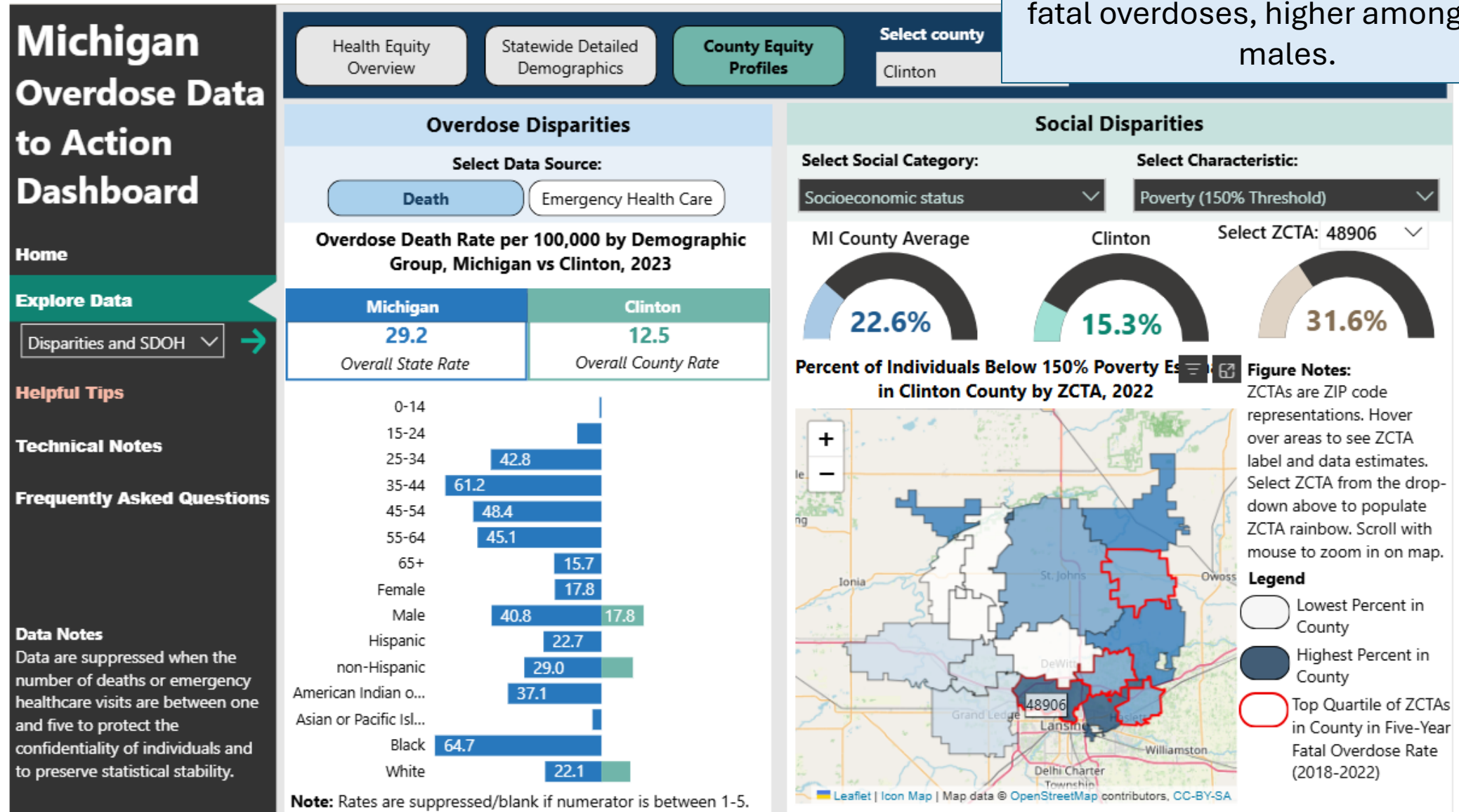
Year	Clinton County Count	Clinton County Rate	Statewide Count	Statewide Rate
2020	142	179.5	34,428	341.6
2021	153	193.4	36,994	367.1
2022	119	150.4	34,963	346.9
2023	119	150.4	33,285	330.3
2024	113	142.8	27,466	272.6

All Drug Fatal Overdoses and Overdose Emergency Health Care Visits, 2020-2024

Year	Fatal Overdoses	Overdose Emergency Health Care Visits
2020	10	128
2021	12	149
2022	7	124
2023	8	118
2024	9	134

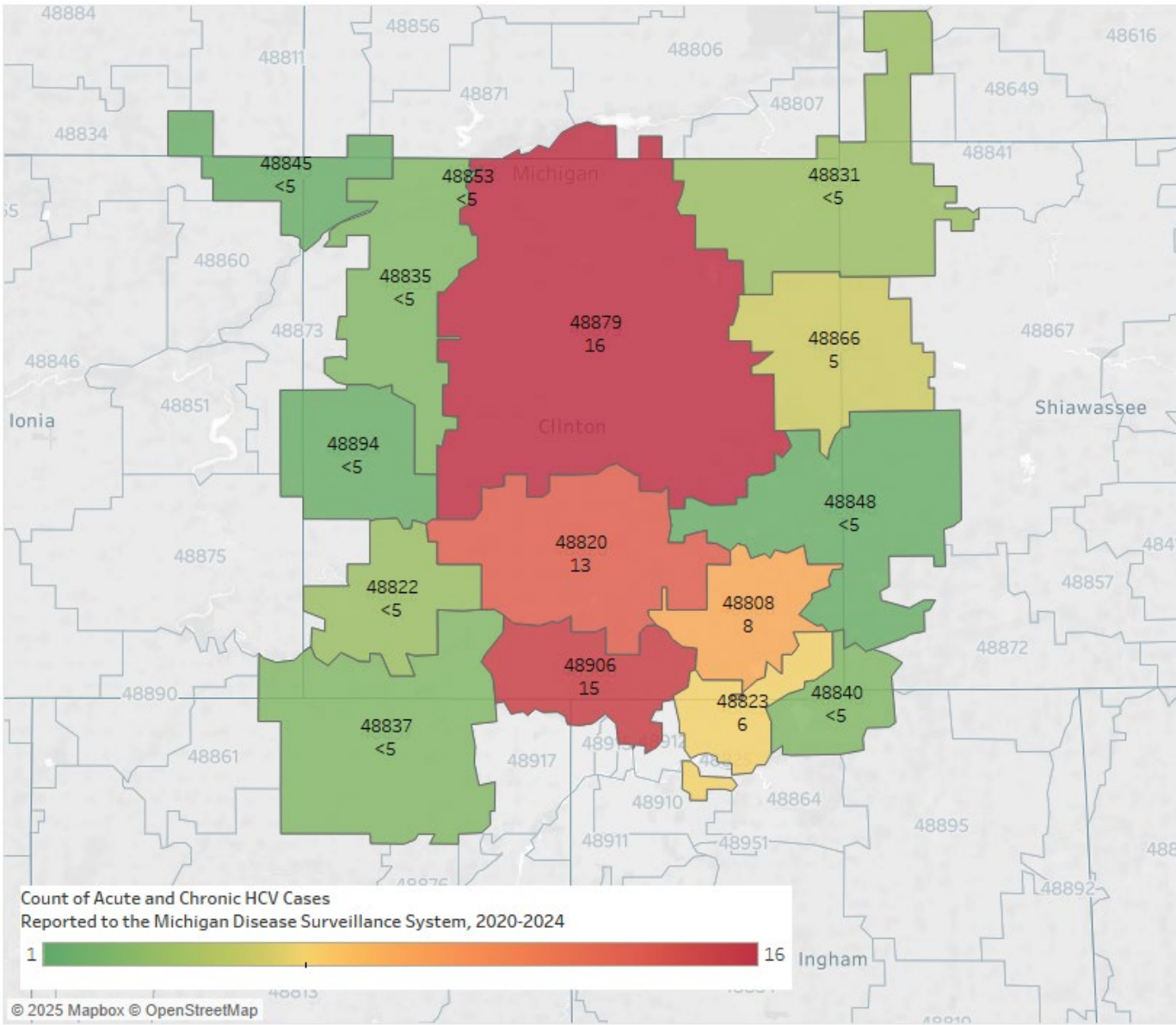
Fatal Overdose Comparisons

Key Finding
Compared to Michigan as a whole, Clinton County has a lower rate of fatal overdoses, higher among white males.



Hepatitis C Heat Map for Clinton County

Chronic and Acute Hepatitis C Cases, Clinton County,
Michigan Disease Surveillance System, 2020-2024



- The majority of hepatitis C cases reported in Clinton County occur in the most populous localities along the US-127 corridor, including DeWitt and St. Johns.
- From 2020-2024, 62% of hepatitis C cases in Clinton County reporting injection drug use were in adults under 45 yrs old.
 - Hepatitis C in adults under 45 is often used as a proxy for people who inject drugs as injection drug use is the most commonly reported risk factor for hepatitis C in this age group
- 77% of all cases of hepatitis C reporting injection drug use were white
- 50% of hepatitis C cases reporting injection drug use had also reported a history of incarceration.

Source: Michigan Disease Surveillance System

Summary

- Harm reduction and syringe service programming is the rule not the exception in Michigan and the United States
- It is used to prevent overdose deaths and harmful and costly infectious disease outbreaks
- Services are cost effective and involved clients are more likely to enter drug treatment
- Syringes are disposed of properly, decreasing litter and needle stick risks
- Harm reduction services would be a benefit to Clinton County and MMDHD

Next Steps:

- Begin discussion with Clinton County Sheriff's Office and local police department as well as members of the Opioid Taskforce to gain support