



Rapid Analysis of Drugs (RAD) Project

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CHRS: Goals and Purpose

- The Maryland Department of Health created the Center for Harm Reduction Services under the Prevention and Health Promotion Administration (PHPA) in 2019 with the goal of centralizing harm reduction activities across MDH.
- CHRS's vision is a Maryland where:
 - people who use drugs have access to compassionate, quality care that is free from stigma;
 - services are low-barrier, community-based, and comprehensive; and
 - experiences of past trauma, criminal legal involvement, and racism do not determine one's health outcomes or quality of life.

Poll #1

How familiar are you with drug checking?

- I work on drug checking projects
- I have a good understanding of drug checking
- I know a little about drug checking
- I have heard of drug checking
- I am completely new to drug checking

Background of RAD

- Maryland experienced record breaking number of overdose fatalities in 2020 and 2021
- Maryland Department of Health, Center for Harm Reduction Services sought a way to incorporate drug checking into Maryland's overdose response strategy
- Drug checking programs empower people who use drugs with knowledge about the drug supply and allow them to make informed decisions and employ risk reduction tactics.

Goals of RAD

CHRS RAD project tests routine paraphernalia from Maryland Syringe Services Program (SSP) participants.

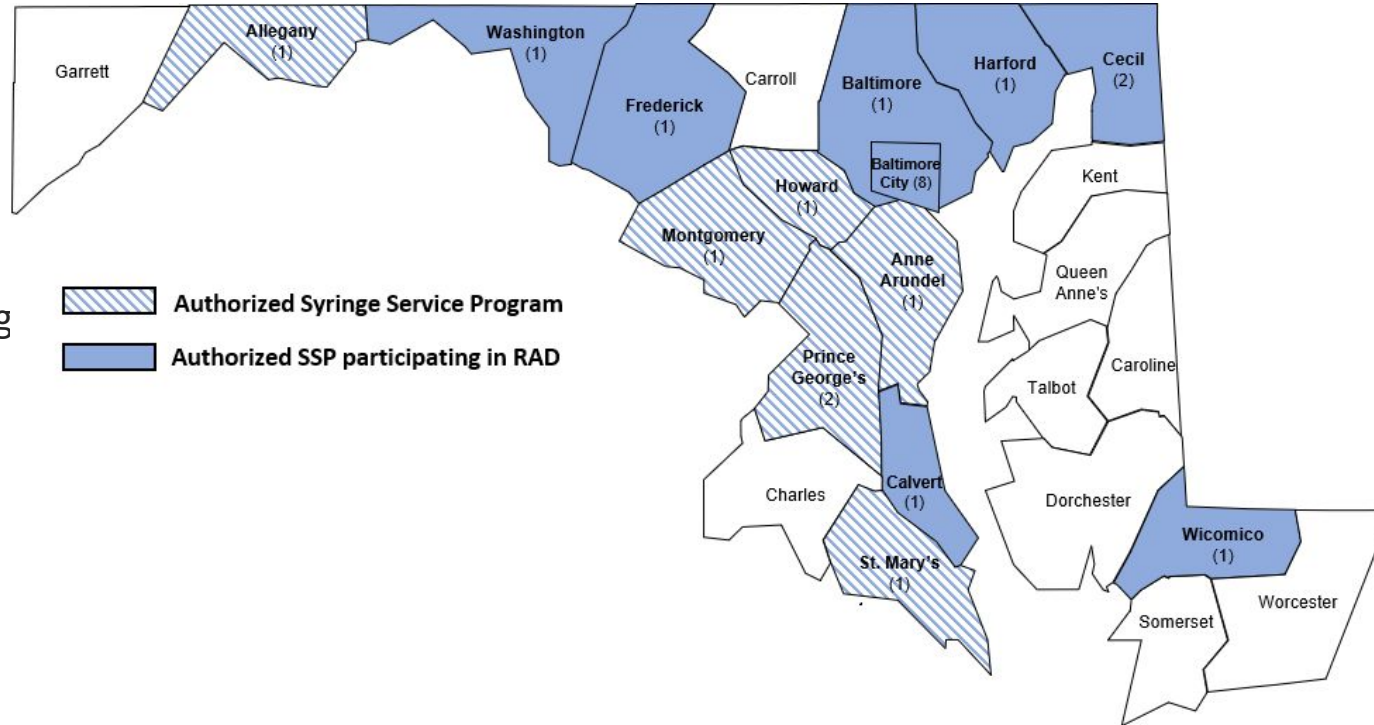
The goals of RAD are to:

- Better understand the drug market landscape in MD
- Empower people who use drugs with knowledge about the drug supply to inform their decisions and reduce risks
- Provide critical information about new and emerging trends in the drug supply

Participating Syringe Service Programs

8 programs in 8 jurisdictions:

- 5 Local Health Departments
- 3 Nonprofit organizations
- 1 nonprofit operating in 2 jurisdictions



Drug Paraphernalia Sampling Instructions



Smoking Device

- Wipe entire exterior of device
- Wipe all openings of the device



Smoking Pipe

- Wipe entire exterior of pipe
- Wipe openings of the device
- *Optional:* Tap pipe on top of wipe to dislodge possible residue



Straw

- Wipe entire exterior of straw
- Wipe openings of the straw
- *Optional:* Tap straw on top of wipe to dislodge possible residue



Scale

- Wipe area of scale where material is weighed



Spoon

- Wipe large portion of the spoon
 - Focus on areas with visible residue if present

Cautions

- **ALWAYS wear nitrile gloves when sampling**
 - Change gloves between samples if possible
- **Do NOT attempt to open packaging**
 - This is especially true if there is visible powder
- **Do NOT lick wipe envelope closed**

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Sample Labeling & Data Collection

Data reported to CHRS via webform:

- Program name
- Where sample received
- Type of sample swabbed/sample medium
- What was the drug sold as?
- Do you believe you received what you intended to buy?
- How did the drugs make you feel?
- Limited location information

Sharing Results

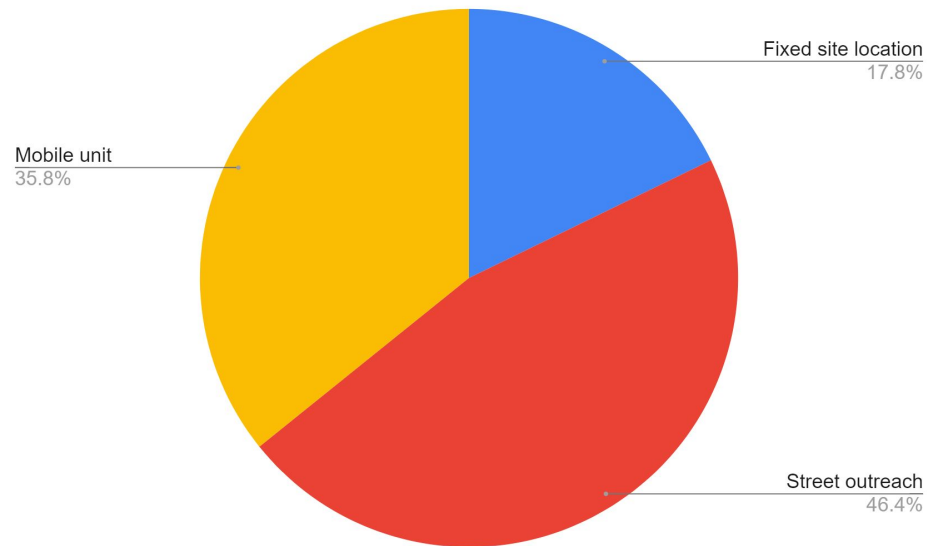
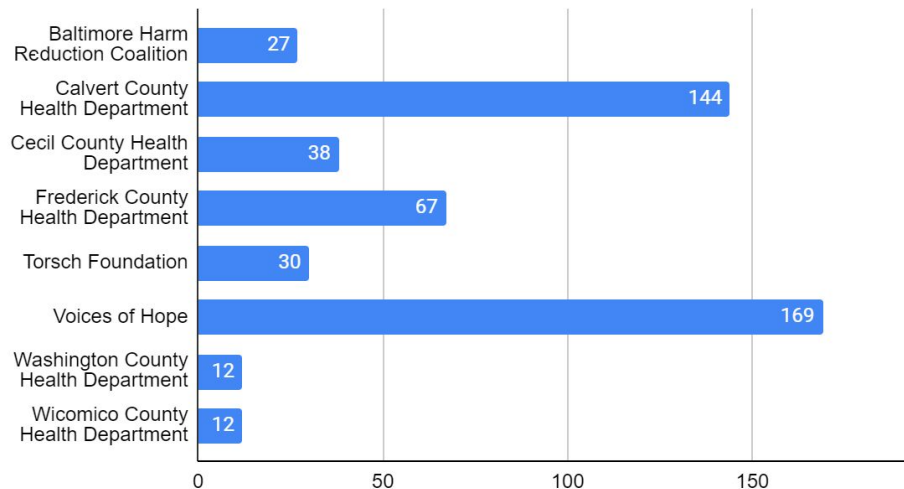
- Results are made available to SSPs through a shared spreadsheet
- Sometime samples require additional confirmatory testing
- SSPs share results with participants in a number of ways:
 - **Individualized results** - given to the person who submitted the sample
 - **Generalized results** - used to tailor community educational material and inform wound care
- The collaborative calls have been a space for SSPs to collaborate with one another, provide feedback, and talk through RAD findings

Results

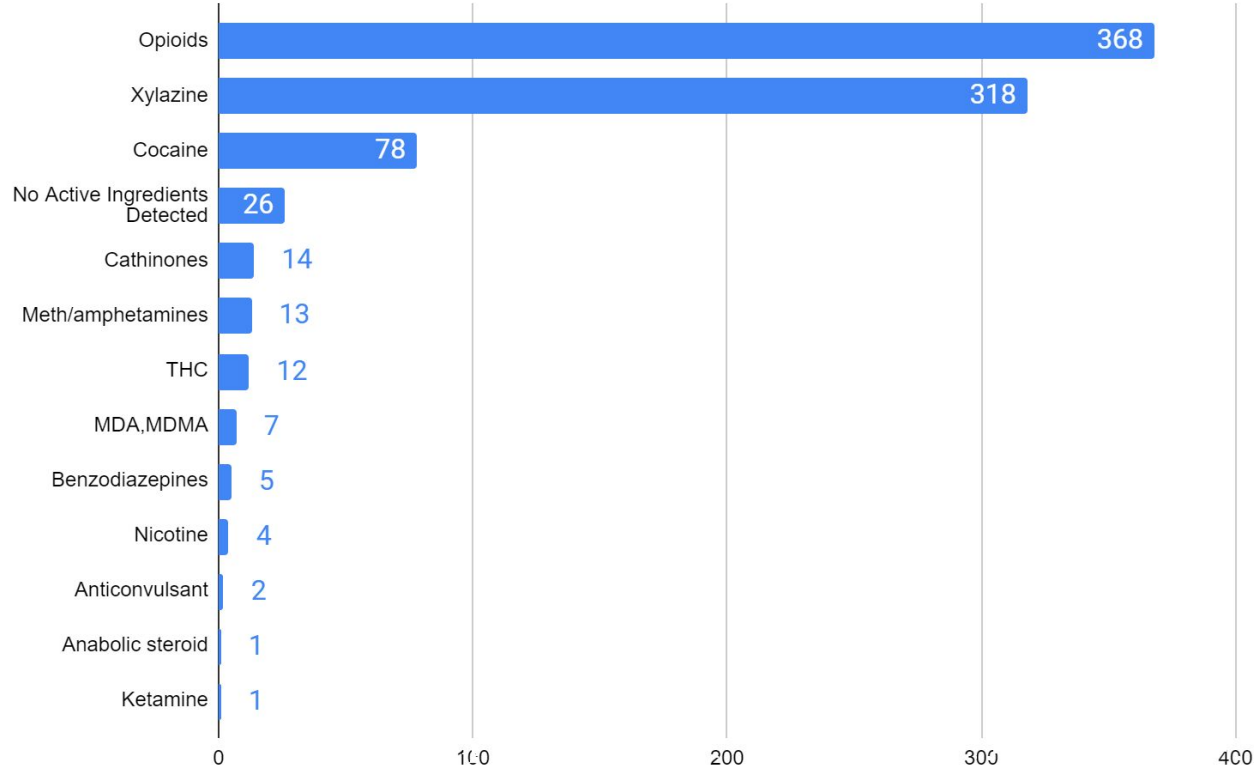
Samples Collected

- Sample Collection began in October 2021 and is continuing
- As of 8/31/2022 we have received 496 samples from 8 sites across the state
- Over 90% of samples did not totally match intended purchase.

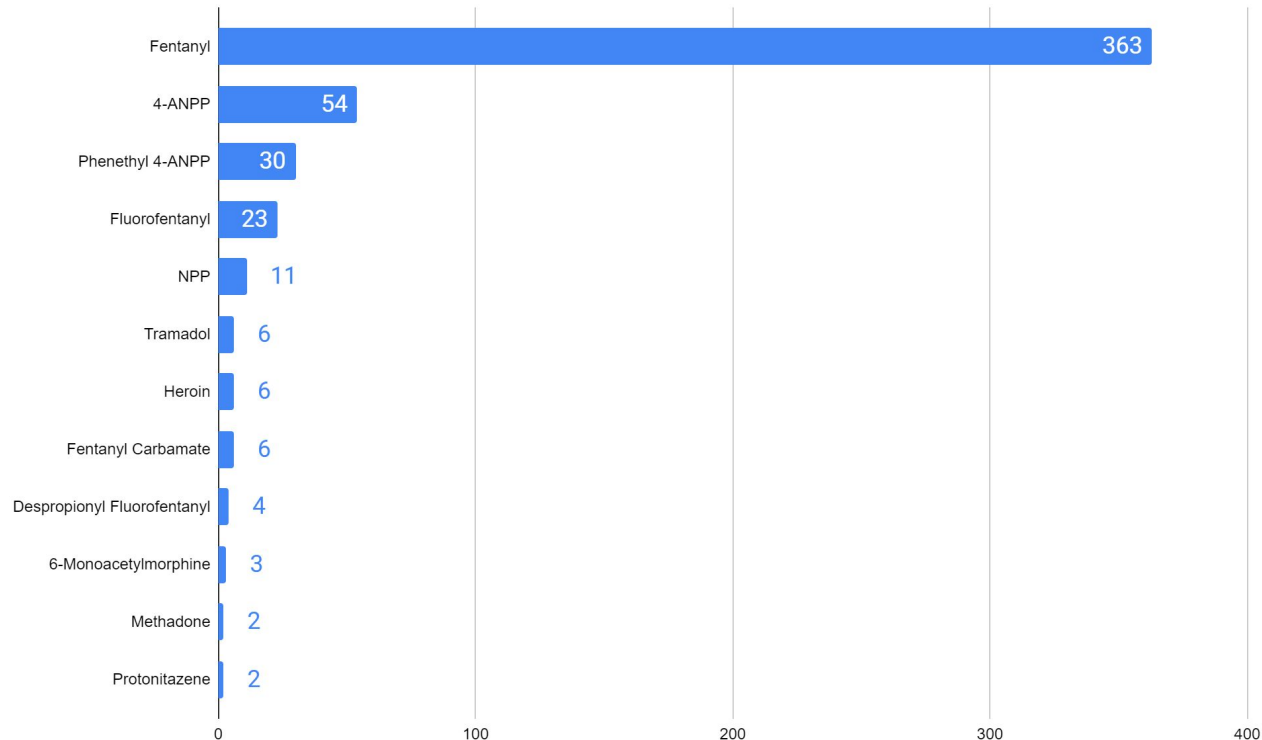
Sample Collection



Results: Active Ingredients

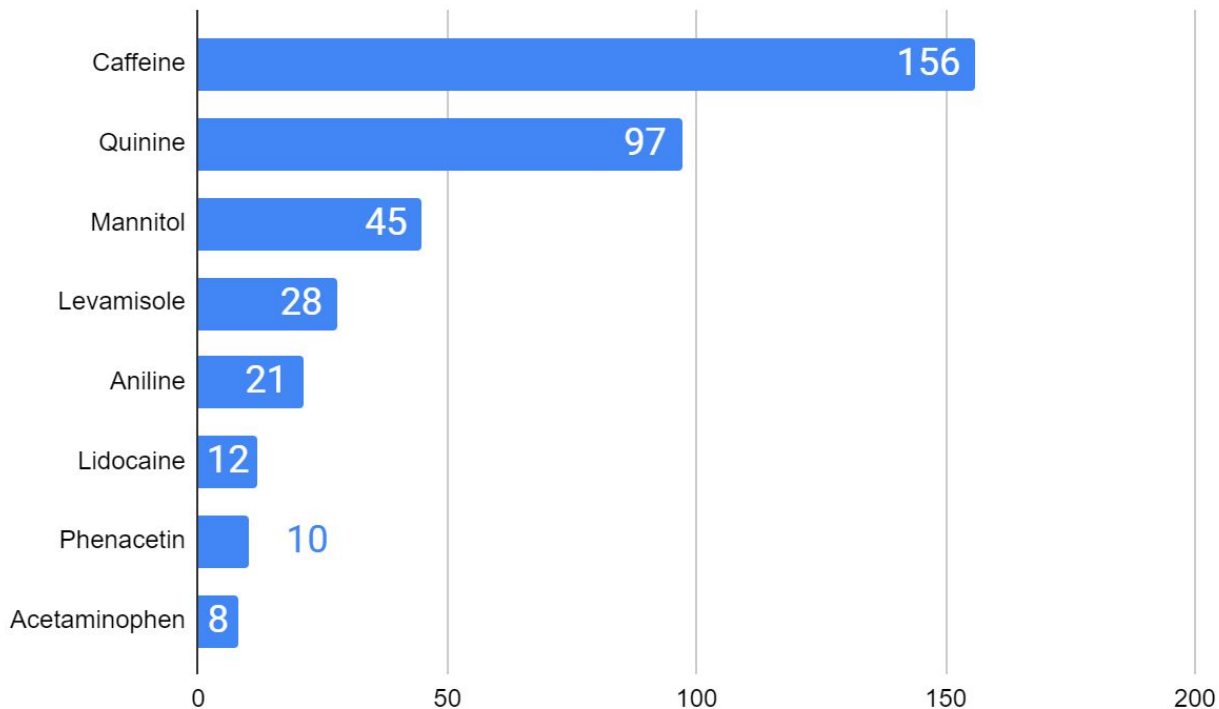


Results: Opioids Only



**Fentanyl
identified in
98.6% of all
opioid samples**

Inactive Ingredients



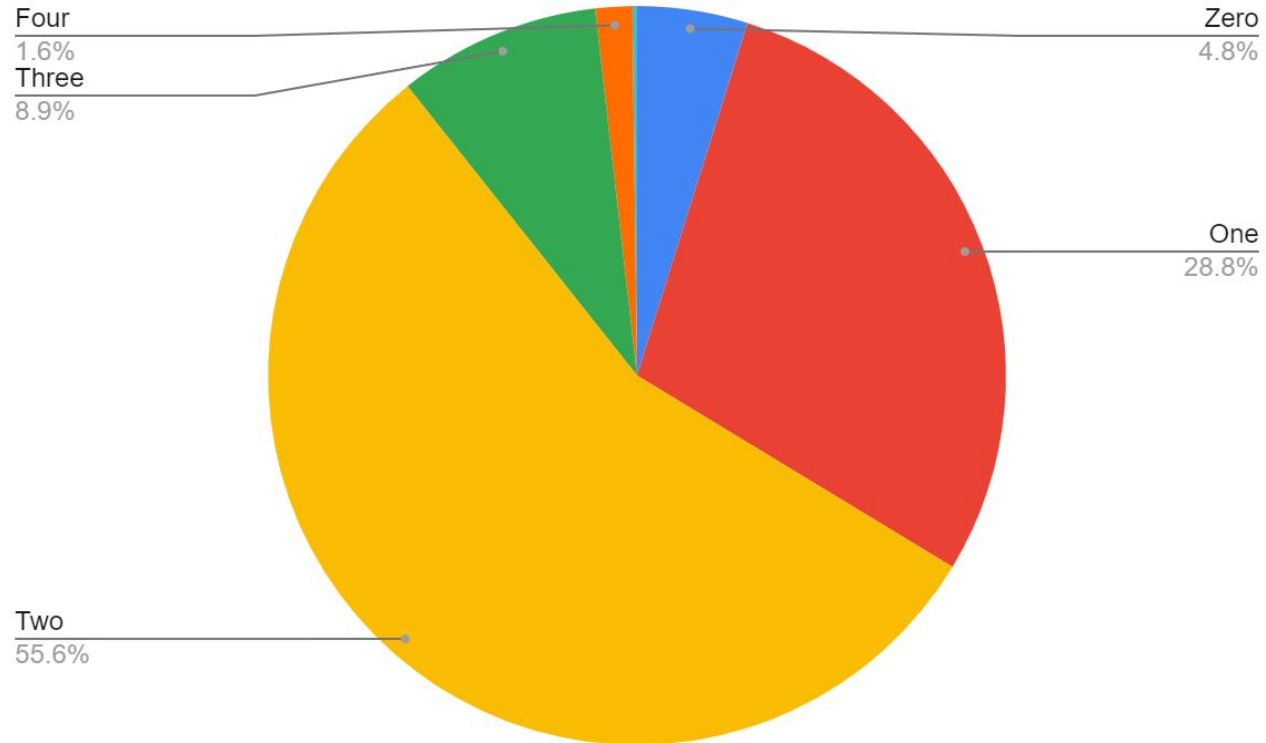
**Caffeine, Quinine,
and Mannitol were
the most common
adulterants
identified**

Poll #2

How many active ingredients do you think were most commonly seen in the RAD samples?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

Results: Multiple Active Ingredients



Polysubstance Breakdown

Opioids	Xylazine	Cocaine	Cathinones	Combination of Substances	
				<i>n</i>	%
X				58	15.76%
	X			17	4.62%
		X		49	13.32%
			X	5	1.36%
X	X			268	72.83%
X		X		7	1.90%
X			X	8	2.17%
X	X	X		16	4.35%

Impact

- **Feasibility of statewide drug checking program**
- **Better understand the drug supply**
- **Anticipated changes in the drugs supply**
- **Deepening partnerships with state and local partners**

Syringe Service Program & Participant Impact

Increased engagement with SSP participants

- Programs sharing results directly back to participant and more broadly with all individuals they serve
- Providing education on rare, or unknown substances and potential side effects and risks

Increased interest in various services/linkages

Participants sharing information/results with others

Next Steps for MDH

- Continued evaluation of the project and incorporation of results into harm reduction strategies and education
- Share RAD results more broadly
- At the end of September 2022 we expanded RAD to
 - All SSPs interested in the program: *4 additional programs have joined*
 - Began testing syringes alongside paraphernalia: *48 syringes tested*

Questions?

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