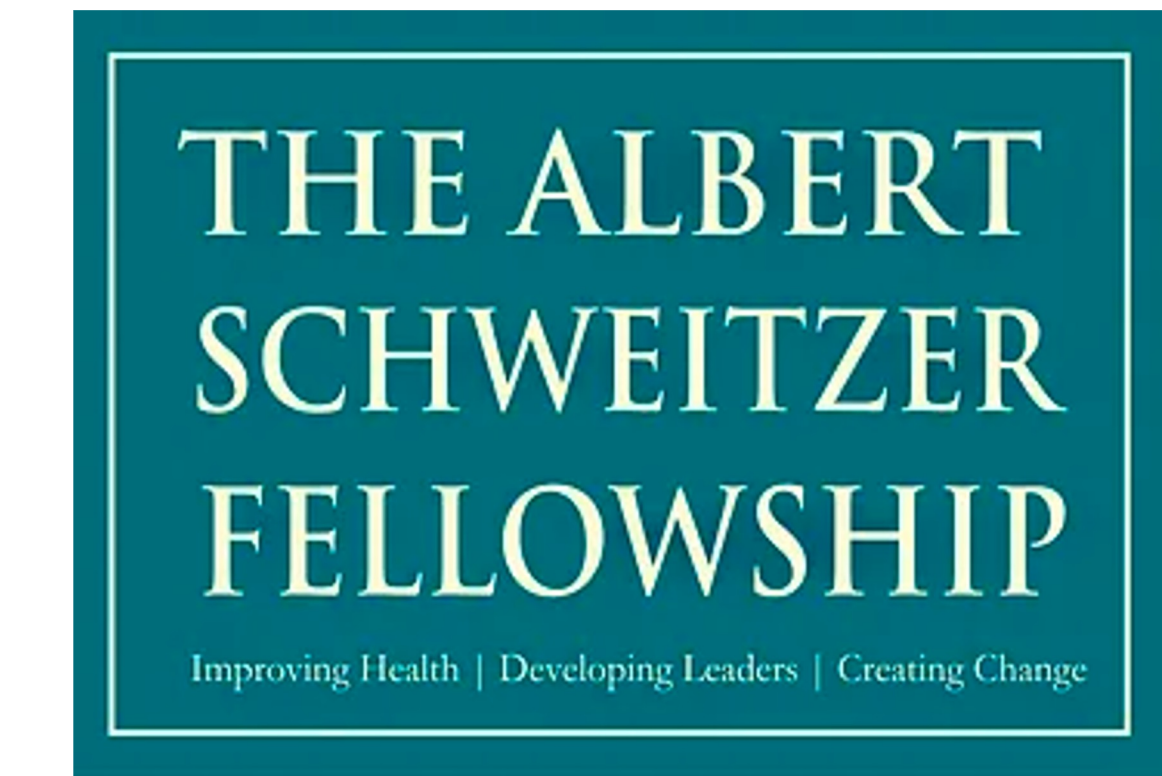




The Nalox-Own Project: Expanding Naloxone Education and Distribution amongst Houston’s Unhoused Population



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Background

Despite the great need for opioid overdose education and Naloxone training for the unhoused community in Houston, TX, there is currently no such initiative in the city. In 2022, the leading cause of death in those experiencing homelessness in Houston was drug toxicity/overdose, accounting for 42.4% of fatalities¹. The purpose of this Naloxone education project is to educate and empower individuals from the unhoused population with the tools to recognize signs of opioid overdose and intervene appropriately.

The Nalox-Own Project

With support from the **Albert Schweitzer Fellowship**, Nguyen and Lee have established a “Nalox-OWN” program for the unhoused population at HOMES Clinic, a program of Healthcare for the Homeless, in partnership with The Beacon (a non-profit organization that provides daily services, legal aid, mentoring and case management to those experiencing homelessness).

The program includes one-on-one Naloxone trainings (adapted from Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery). After training is complete, a naloxone kit and resource navigation is provided to each participant.



Photo 2: “Nalox-own kit” containing two Naloxone intranasal sprays, gloves, and instructions.

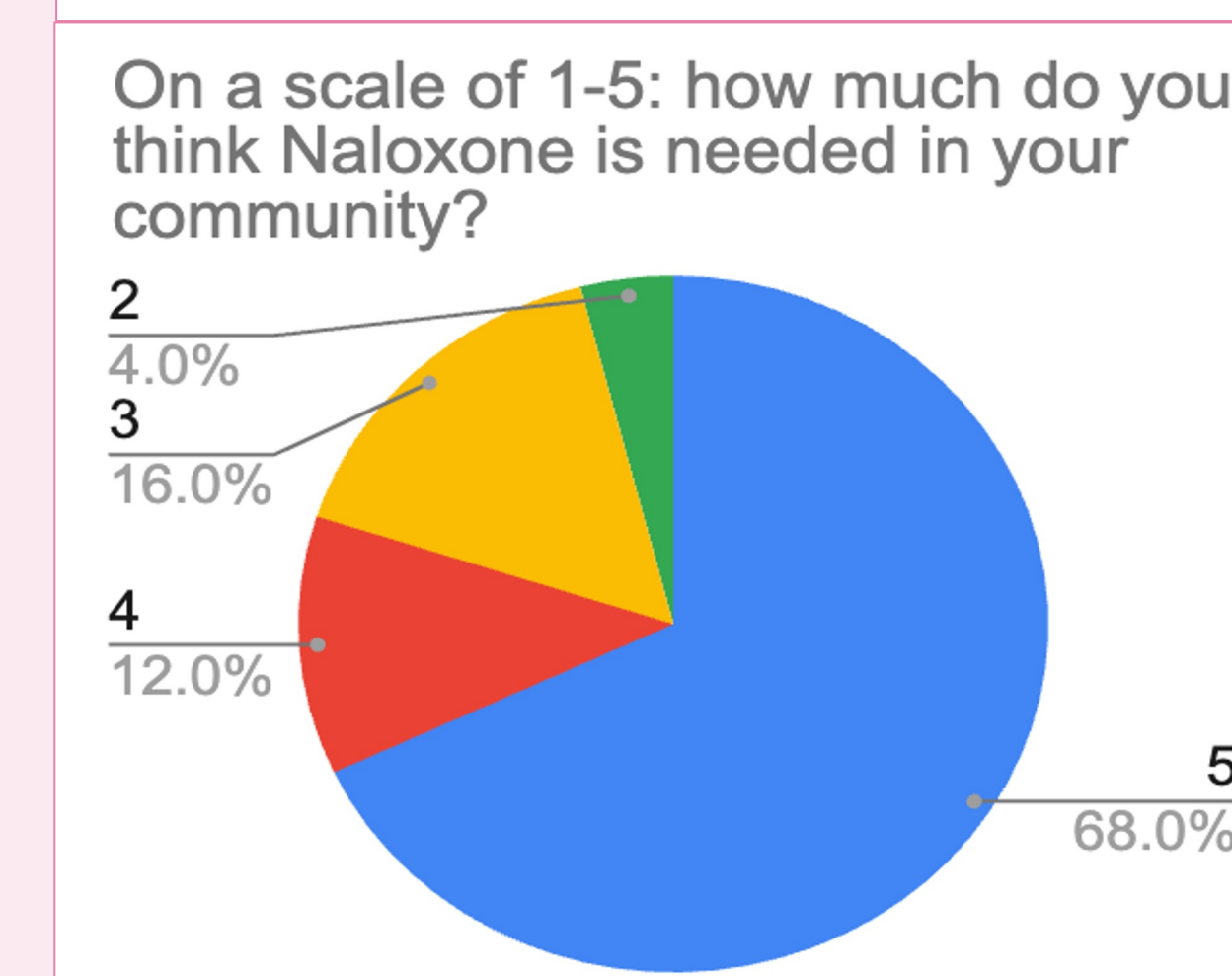
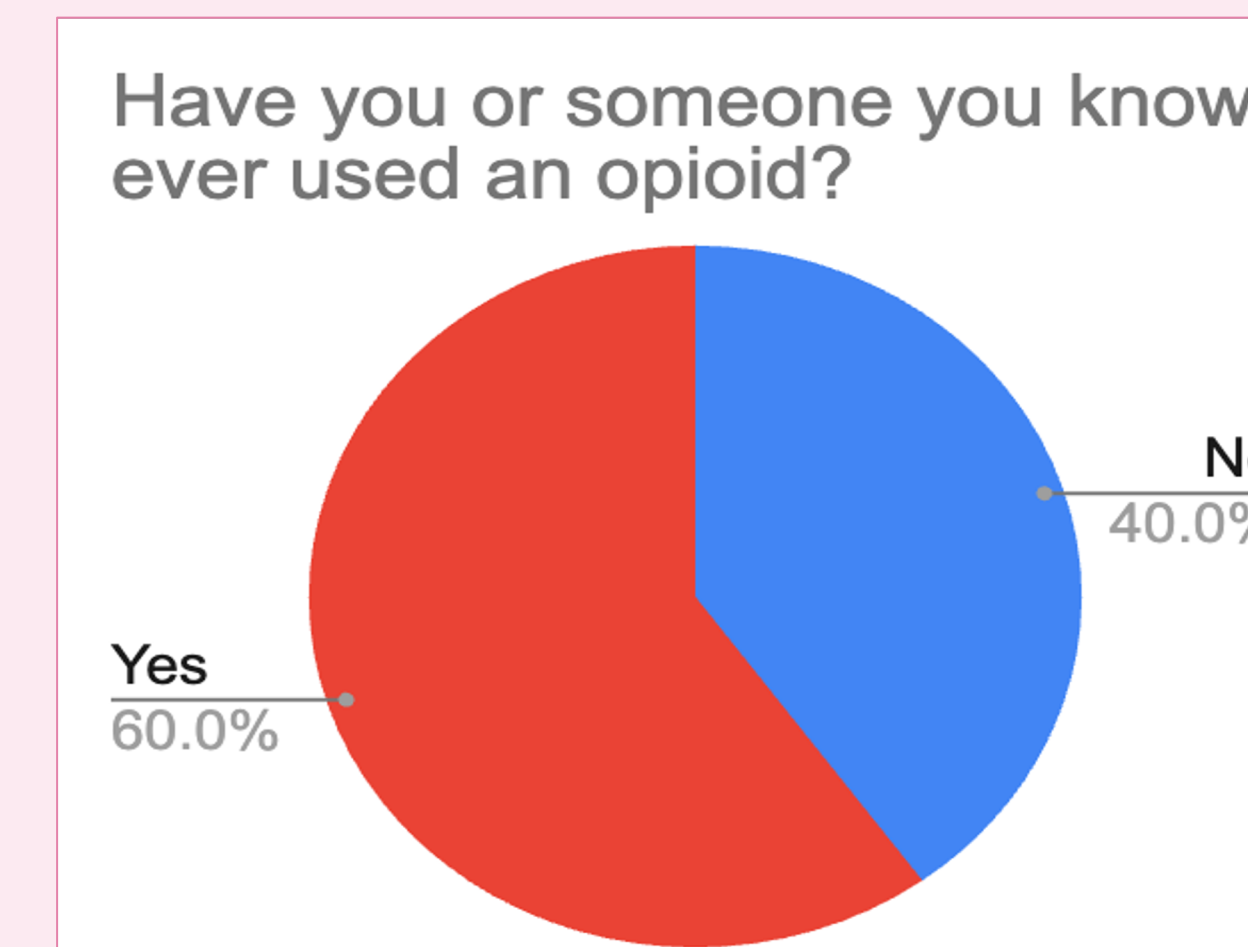
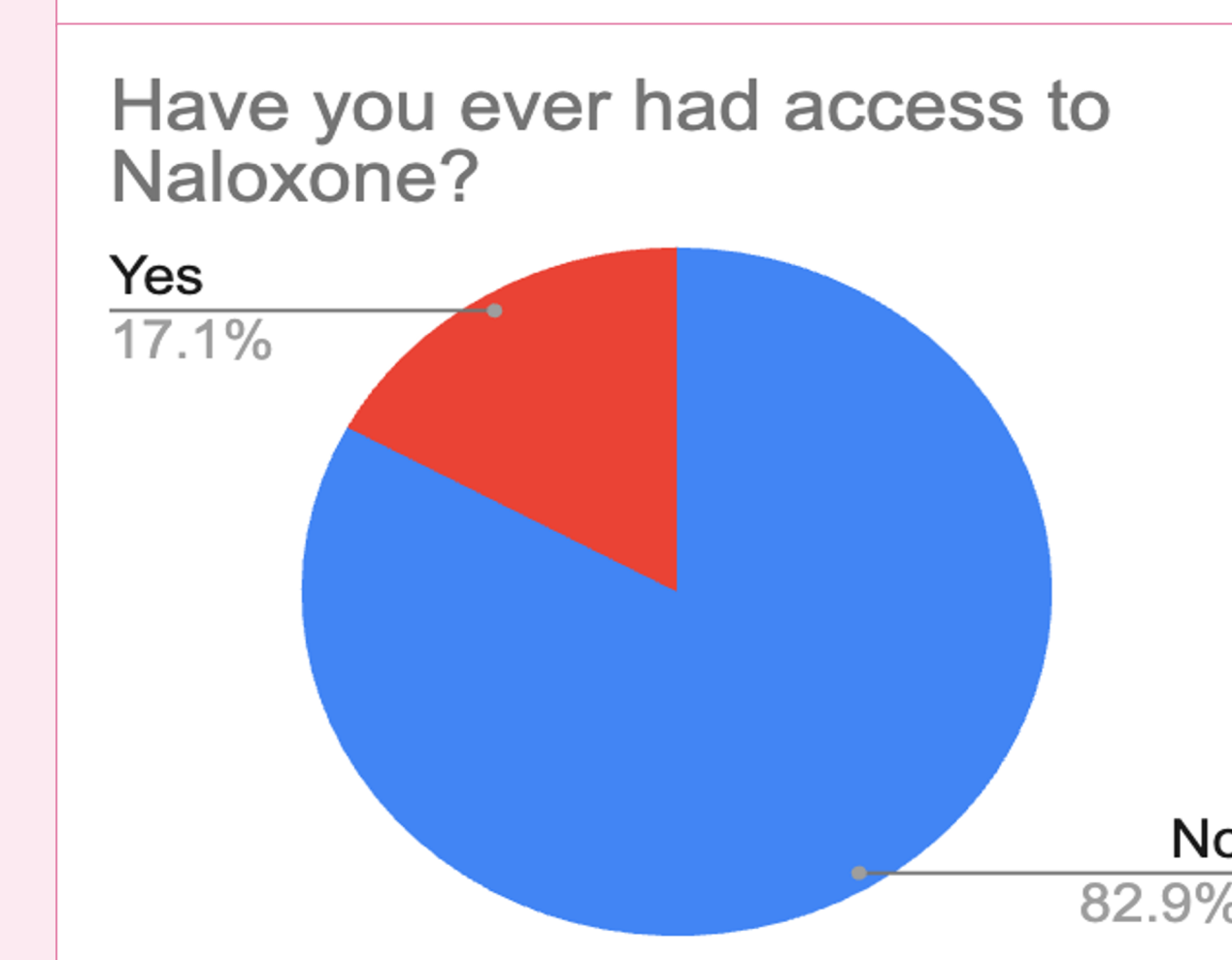
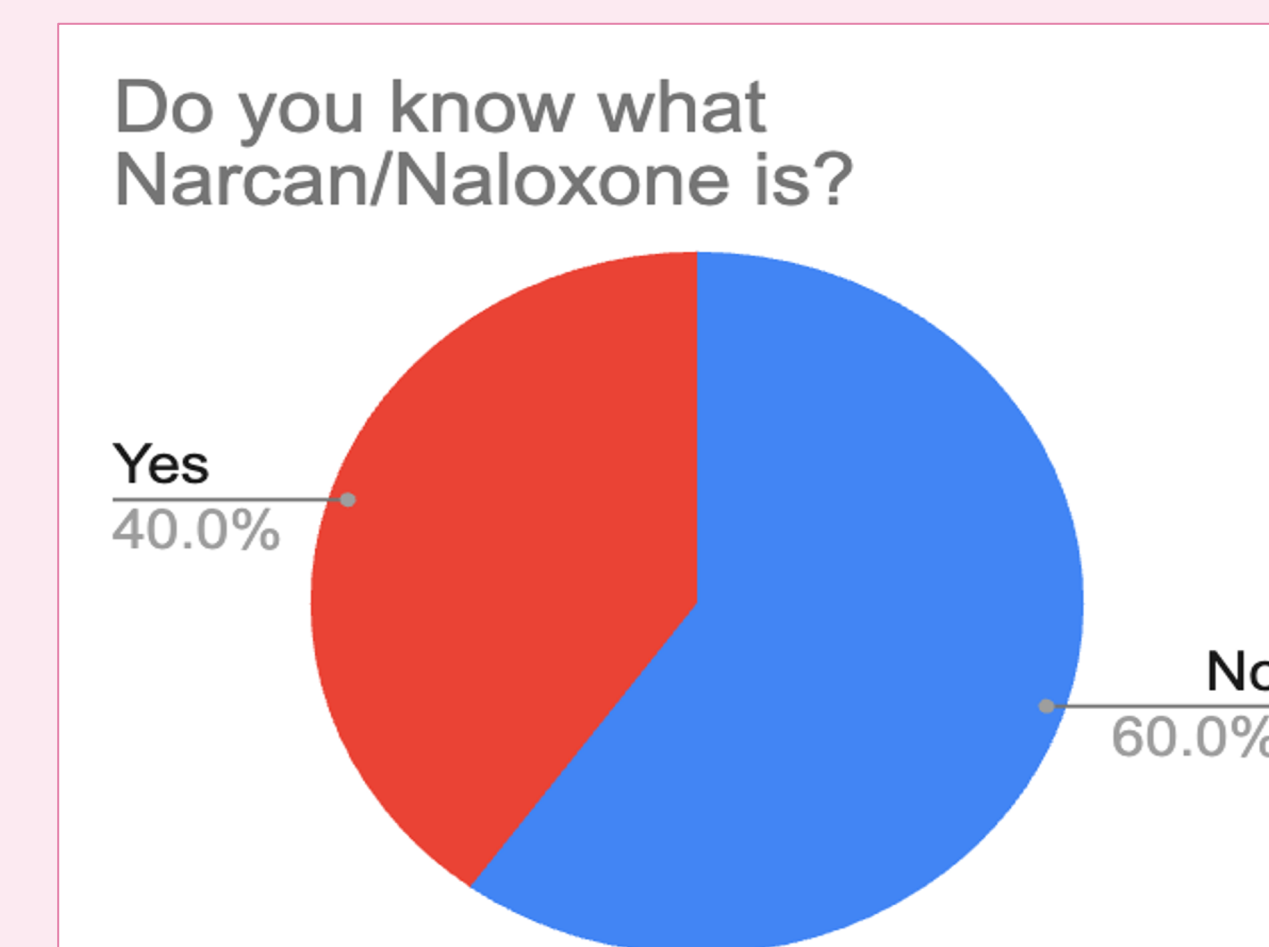
Community Need

A needs assessment was performed to gain a deeper understanding of the community’s need for the project, and pre and post training surveys were applied to measure effectiveness of the training.

Of the 35 participants surveyed in the needs assessment:

- **40%** had prior knowledge of Naloxone
- **60%** have used or know someone who has used opioids
- **17.1%** had prior access to Naloxone.
- When asked on a scale from 1-5 how much they thought Naloxone was needed in their community, **68%** responded 5, correlating to the most need.

Participant scores improved from an average of 43% correct on the pre-surveys to 80% correct on post-surveys after training, demonstrating an increase in overdose knowledge and Naloxone understanding. Since the program begun in July, we have trained 24 individuals experiencing homelessness how to use Naloxone.



Discussion

Personal narratives and the needs assessment results revealed a great need for Naloxone training for Houston’s unhoused population. Pre and post surveys also demonstrated an increased understanding of overdose signs and Naloxone administration after undergoing training, indicating the effectiveness of the training education. Equipping individuals with Naloxone kits and proper training will lead to many lives saved.

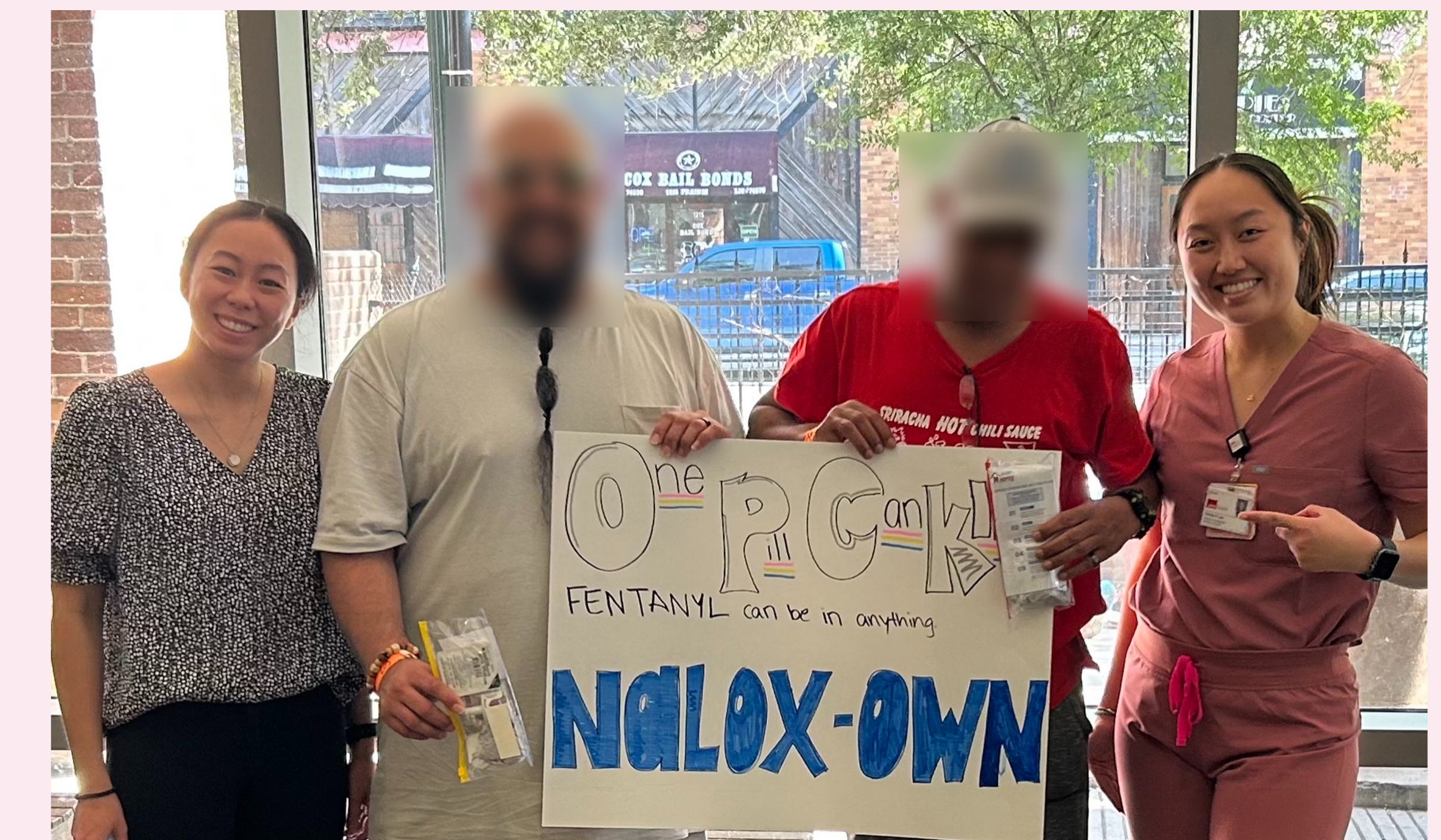


Photo 2: Nguyen (L) and Lee (R) with two trainees.

References

1. King, Ben, et al. HARRIS COUNTY HOMELESSNESS MORTALITY REPORT 2022. Tilman J Fertitta College of Medicine, University of Houston, November 2023.

