Femmes, Fetty, and Eternal Forgiveness: A Feminist Approach to Harm Reduction

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Harm Reduction Sisters

Introduction

Harm Reduction Sisters (HRS) provides a feminist response to harm reduction, utilizing innovative harm reduction principles and practices to address the gaps that exist for people who use drugs and experience trauma. HRS, fueled by COVID-19, utilizes principles such as radical acceptance and the dedication of guerilla healthcare workers to serve communities impacted by drug use in Minnesota and Northern Wisconsin, with a special focus on Black and Native American populations that have been disproportionately impacted.

Outreach

For individuals who have transportation barriers or cannot otherwise visit an office, mobile outreach and mailing services are available. These services afford individuals important anonymity across the country and utilizes a network of guerilla healthcare workers.

Over 211 deliveries were made in 2024, by either mobile unit or mailing.

Testing Services

HRS offers HIV, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis testing for interested participants as well as non-medical HIV case management and links to culturally competent health services.

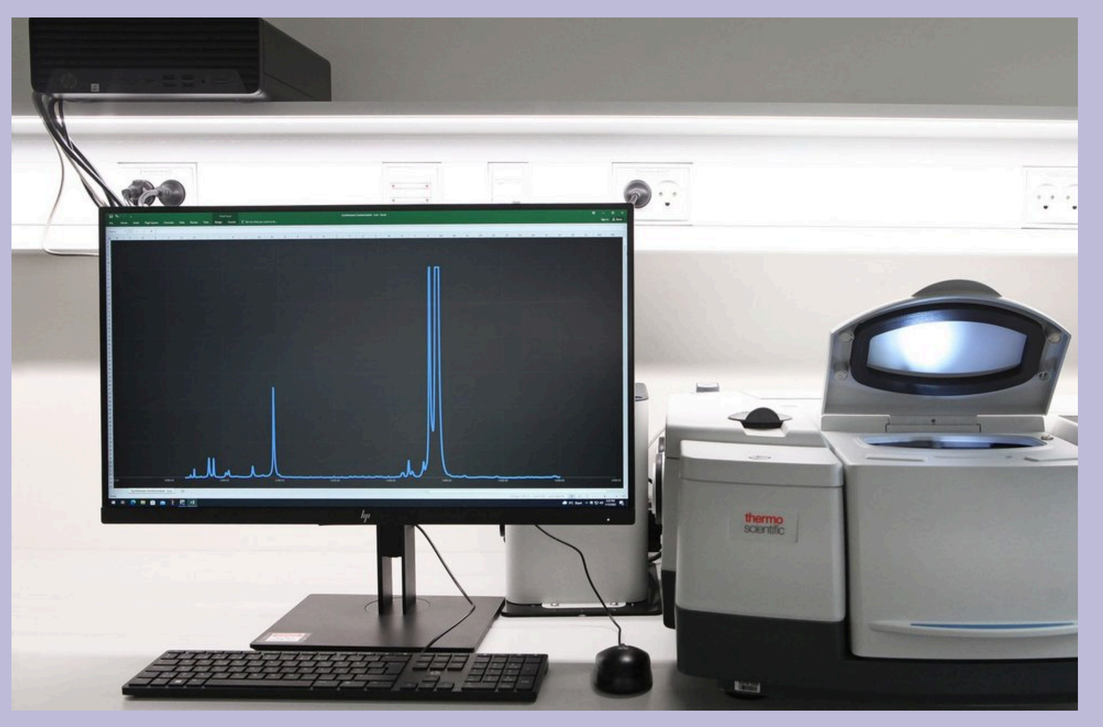
In 2024, approximately 120 tests were conducted and over 275 tests in 2023.

SSP

Each office is outfitted with a functional SSP and is equipped to serve individuals with a variety of services. In a year, direct contact is had by each location with approximately these many people:

- Virginia, Hibbing, and Grand Rapids: 230
- Duluth: 555

**Only direct contact with individuals can be counted. Many individuals supply other individuals in their communities.*



Drug Checking

HRS, through the Department of Human Services of Minnesota, was granted a Fourier-Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR) machine. HRS hired a drug checking technician and since September 2024 over 70 samples have been tested.

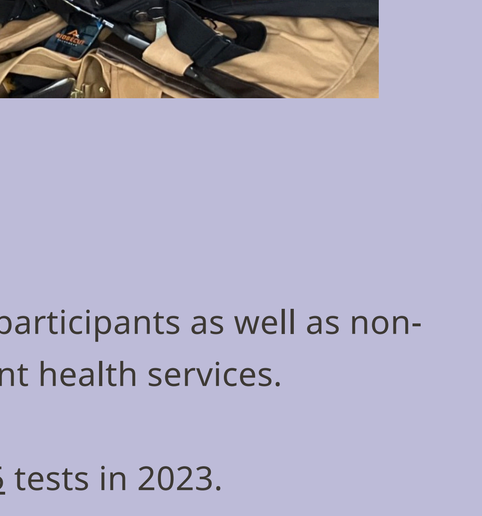
The FTIR machine has a 5% limit of detection and can detect any substance from a sample as long as the providing library has detected the substance previously, allowing the FTIR machine to stay up to date as new substances enter the scene.

Hub and Spoke

HRS has satellite offices in otherwise underserved areas of Northern Minnesota. The offices are located in the following cities:

- **Virginia**
- **Hibbing**
- **Grand Rapids**

The main office is located in Duluth and serves the surrounding areas as well as Northern Wisconsin.

Disproportionately Impacted Communities

Minnesota has one of the largest health disparities between white individuals and individuals who are BIPOC, with particular inequities among Black and Native American individuals in rural and northern urban areas. In Minnesota, 22% of the overall population is comprised of people of color, with Native American individuals making up 2% of the total population and Black individuals making up 7% of the total population (as of April 2024). HRS aims to increase health equity in the harm reduction sphere by both employing Black and Native American individuals and providing services specific to Black and Native American individuals.