

Mainline Needle Exchange 1992 - 2012

“And they said it wouldn’t last...”





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“What can you say about 20 years for Mainline? 20 years of unending dedication? 20 years of seeing life through someone else’s eyes. 20 years of advocacy. 20 years of changing environments. 20 years of speaking the truth. 20 years of changing people’s lives. 20 years of helping communities. 20 years of dedication. 20 years of giving. Thank you for letting me be a part of your network and circle. Mainline is a jewel in our community. Mainline makes a difference. Congratulations.”

Janet Braunstein Moody, Senior Director of Public Health Renewal

Director's Message

I graciously thank everyone who assisted in the evolution of Mainline: the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness and the Micmac Native Friendship Centre for their continued support, the Capital and District Health Authorities, Public Health, the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS to all of you for being there when we needed support - Thank You.

To the countless number of community, academic and government partners who assisted with proposal writing, accountability reports, final reports and who have personally supported, directed and guided me through the years and always allowed me to have the glory - Thank You.

To the Direction 180 low threshold methadone program and the Mobile Outreach Street Health program for acknowledging Mainline as a key component to their programs - Thank You.

To Kelly Adamson, Jennifer Pasiciel, and Lois Jackson for their help with this document - Thank You.

To the committed and dedicated individuals who worked at Mainline, the lost but not forgotten, the ones who have retired, the ones who have moved on, and especially to the ones who are presently at Mainline - Thank You.

Lastly, to the many clients who have trusted us in their lives, "you are the reason we can celebrate this occasion - we could never have done this without you" - Thank You.

Yours in Community,



Diane Bailey

Mission Statement:

The Mainline Needle Exchange Program is a health promotion project dedicated to supporting current and former people who use drugs through harm reduction programs. Harm reduction treats drug use as a health concern rather than a criminal or moral issue. We are committed to supporting people who use drugs to focus on their health and well-being through: raising awareness, education and empowerment.

HIV/AIDS in North America:

A brief history

The official beginning of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic in North America was in 1981, when gay men in some areas of the United States became sick from illness as a result of a weakened immune system. In 1982, the Laboratory for Disease Control in Ottawa recorded the first AIDS-related fatality in Canada.

The first official AIDS diagnosis in Nova Scotia, as well as the first Canadian death attributed to AIDS, occurred in 1983. The same year, two researchers from France discovered the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and linked its transmission to sexual intercourse.

Although HIV/AIDS, originally appeared to affect homosexual males, the situation seemed to be evolving as more heterosexual males, women, and children became infected. HIV and other blood borne illnesses are also spread by the sharing of needles, which transmits infected blood into the bloodstream.



Why Mainline?

Injection drug users are capable and motivated to change high-risk behaviors associated with the transmission of HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and other blood borne diseases. A non-judgmental approach that provides risk-reducing options by encouraging safer injection and sexual practices and that can facilitate entry into substance abuse treatment has been shown to reduce the spread of blood borne diseases among people who use drugs, and consequently their non-using contacts. It is for these reasons a needle exchange and condom distribution program exists in Halifax. It is for these reasons that Mainline Needle Exchange works!

“Needle exchanges are controversial, but they are crucial to keeping blood-borne diseases like Hepatitis B and AIDS from spreading through the general population. Needle exchanges are a necessary part of effective intervention. If AIDS and Hepatitis B are not yet present in local needle-using circles, they will be soon.”

Dr. Fred Rockwell, Director of the Atlantic Health Unit

The History of Needle Exchange in Atlantic Canada: Mainline and beyond

1988-1991

The Nova Scotia Persons with AIDS Coalition (NSPWAC) began in 1988. In August of 1989 NSPWAC started an unofficial needle exchange program, dispensing 5,000 needles in their first year.

Flare-ups of Hepatitis B in North Sydney in 1988 and near Bridgewater in 1990 were linked to needle sharing among injection drug users. In 1990, the Nova Scotia provincial health department revealed an injection drug user had contracted HIV, and was potentially spreading it to other injection drug users.

Health Minister George Moody announced in November 1990 that the province would fund a needle exchange program. Beginning that year, the province, along with various community agencies, worked for two years to develop a needle exchange program. The agencies involved included the Micmac Native Friendship Centre, the North End Community Health Centre, the Stepping Stone Association, the Persons with AIDS Coalition, as well as a branch of Correctional Services Canada.

Atlantic First Nations AIDS Task Force (AFNATF) was formed in 1991 to educate First Nation's communities about HIV/AIDS.

1992

Mainline Needle Exchange officially opened its door on May 2nd, 1992 from a storefront location on Agricola Street. Mainline began as a small operation with a few staff providing harm reduction materials, including clean needles

and condoms, to people in Halifax. Mainline provided services to a variety of people: young and old, male and female, casual and hard drug users were exchanging used needles for new ones.

The needle exchange was staffed by recovering drug users. In addition to providing harm reduction materials, Mainline also provided information about treatment options, such as detox,

Needles Dispensed
May 2, 1992 – March 31, 1993
12,531



Original staff– Marion Flint, Valerie Firth, Diane Bailey & Thom Grandy

community social services, and the legal and justice system.

While there were no statistics on injection drug use at the time, most health and social workers agreed that the problem had been escalating. Estimates for the province ranged from 500 to well over 1,000 injection drug users, with the majority concentrated in the metro Halifax area.

The AIDS Coalition of Cape Breton (ACCB) opened in Sydney in 1992. (<http://accb.ns.ca/>)

“To turn the tide, the centre [Mainline] must earn the trust of a secretive community and encourage them to change their ways. We aren’t preachers and we don’t ask questions. They have to come by themselves and decide for themselves. But it’s already turning into a support centre, people trying to get off the stuff.”

***Gordon King, Executive Director, Micmac Native Friendship Centre,
as quoted in the Chronicle Herald, June 6, 1992***

1993

The needle exchange began to provide a mobile “outreach” program, distributing business cards and posters to local bars. Interest in and use of the needle exchange seemed to be increasing and reaching a

population that would otherwise not have access to harm reduction and basic health services.

In 1993, the Nova Scotia Department of Health launched the provinces first provincial AIDS strategy. That same year, the National AIDS Strategy was renewed for five years, and, the Krever Inquiry began to investigate how thousands of Canadians had become infected with HIV and Hepatitis C from blood and blood products.

Mainline assisted Health and Welfare Canada with the research project “Out of the Mainstream Youth.” The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of groups of youth identified as high-risk, in order to provide comprehensive information for relevant program development.

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 1993– March 31, 1994
50,398



Greg Power, Mainline’s #1

1994

In January, Frank Magazine ran an article, “The Hopes and Fears of the Mainline Needle Exchange Program,” focusing on Mainline director, Valerie Firth. The article notes that Valerie Firth has “street smarts” from her previous experience as an injection drug user, a unique kind of knowledge that many Nova Scotia bureaucrats do not have.

Mainline successfully received its first funding grant from Health Canada for the project entitled “***New Occupational Hazards of Career Addicts: Mainline Intravenous Needs Assessment.***” The project was intended to reach drug users in the Metro area who were at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. The injection drug users targeted were especially at risk due to behaviors such as sharing needles, having unprotected sex, and being too involved in their drug use to recognize the risks or take them seriously.

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 1994 – March 31, 1995
50,398



Essie Hickey and Beau Hall

“Cocaine, which dissolves easily in water and packs a more potent punch when injected than snorted, is the main reason for a growing addict population in Halifax. But there are also junkies who shoot up prescription drugs, like the pain-killer Dilaudid, which contains morphine. It’s a very popular, very addictive way to do cocaine, and cocaine is very accessible in the city.”

***Valerie Firth, past Mainline Director,
 as quoted in the Chronicle Herald, June 6, 1992***

In the spring of 1994, Drug Dependency Services (DDS) approached members of the community, including Mainline, to collaborate on a new methadone maintenance program based on the highly successful harm reduction approach. An earlier DDS methadone pilot project had provided methadone to a limited number of opiate-dependent persons, and found that there was an ongoing need for methadone. However, a different program approach that solicited client input and was more user-directed was necessary.

An article in the North End News in March of 1994 showcased an article “Marion - Mainline’s Hope for Addicts”. A support group for troubled women, Flint called Mainline’s women’s group “the best thing that ever happened to me.” The group was a place where women could discuss whatever was important to them, like sexual assault or battered women syndrome, and other topics that they were uncomfortable discussing in front of men.

“Nobody condemns you for what you’ve been through. We learn to do things that women have to do for themselves, and that we have the right to do what we want. I’ve seen them when they’re not doing too good, but when you talk to them and support them, and when they leave, you can see a world of difference.”

Marion Flint, Mainline staff, 1994

The Sunday Daily News also ran an article entitled “Risk of Hepatitis C greater than HIV in Blood.” The article outlined that Hepatitis C, a viral infection carried by almost 500 million people worldwide, is spread by contact with blood. Most people infected do not get sick, but in roughly 10 per cent of cases the infection can lead to liver cancer and cirrhosis, the seventh-leading cause of death in Canada.

Anonymous HIV testing became available in Nova Scotia through the Planned Parenthood Metro Clinic. (<http://www.halifaxsexualhealth.ca/>)

“Mainline is much more than a needle exchange program. It is also a support service, an advocacy agency, an outreach program, and a counseling and resource centre.”

Frank Magazine, January 1994

1995

Staff from the Anonymous Testing Project expressed concerns that individuals who were injection drug users were not getting HIV testing at the Planned Parenthood site. In response, the staff from the Anonymous Testing Project began providing HIV testing on Tuesday afternoons at Mainline.

AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia (ACNS) began, following an amalgamation of AIDS Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Persons with AIDS Coalition. (<http://acns.ns.ca/>)

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 1995– March 31, 1996
101, 439

1996

The Mainline Intravenous Needs Assessment report identified a need to examine the impact of addiction on the mental well being of the children of addicts. Mainline received funding from Human Resources Development Canada for the ***“Children of Drug Addicted Parents”*** project. The project collected and interpreted information from children raised by drug

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 1996 – March 31, 1997
140,004

addicted parents in order to improve, modify or supplement existing services. The goal of this project was to develop a more holistic approach to harm reduction programs and services for the family unit as a whole.

Mainline assisted Health Canada to test the training resource entitled “Street Children, Substance Use and Health: Training for Street Educators” developed by the World Health Organization.

Sharp Advice Needle Exchange (SANE) opens in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

(<http://accb.ns.ca/services/sharp-advice-needle-exchange/>)

1997

The “HIV/AIDS and Injection Drug Use,” A National Action Plan, was produced by the National AIDS Strategy in collaboration with Canada’s Drug Strategy. The document stated that “Canada is in the midst of a public health crisis concerning HIV/AIDS and injection drug use”. Recommendations:

- Discriminatory attitudes toward drug users living with HIV or AIDS must be addressed, with a view to elimination, both in the general public and within professional groups
- Services involving the exchange of needles must be improved
- Access to methadone treatment must be improved
- Needle disposal services must be improved

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 1997 – March 31, 1998
141,517

A working group on HIV and Injection Drug Use was created to develop local initiatives based on the national report “HIV, AIDS and Injection Drug Use”. The primary focus of this group was the establishment of a low threshold methadone program. Working group members included Public Health Nurses, Addiction Services, the Central Region Health Board, the North End Community Health Centre, the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS, and Mainline.

1998

Mainline received funding from Health Canada for a two year project entitled: “**Aboriginal Injection Drug Users and Needle Exchange Programs: Identifying Barriers in Nova Scotia.**” The project aimed to identify and describe the population of Aboriginal injection drug users and identify barriers that prevented them from accessing treatment.

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 1998 – March 31, 1999
164,178

An outbreak of Hepatitis B among injection drug users in Cumberland County prompted Public Health Services to contract Mainline to provide needle exchange services in the Amherst area. There were a total of ten laboratory-confirmed cases of Hepatitis B among the 25 injection drug users screened, as well as two injection drug-use related deaths.

Students from the School of Health Services Administration at Dalhousie University prepared a paper entitled “An Economic Evaluation of the Mainline Needle Exchange, Halifax, Canada.” This study evaluated the cost effectiveness of the Mainline needle exchange program. Analysis was guided by the question: Is it more cost effective to prevent the transmission of HIV through the Mainline needle exchange program or to treat one individual who has become infected with HIV? Results from the analysis concluded that Mainline saved the province approximately 11 million dollars in direct spending through HIV prevention activities over the 1993 - 1997 period.

“The students learned how to do an economic evaluation, the difficulties associated with it, and the benefits of this type of analysis. However, they also learned about the broader health issues associated with addictions and intravenous drug use and their economic and social implications. They discovered that significant economic societal benefits can accrue from small (and often underfunded) programs such as yours”

Ethel Langille, professor, Dalhousie University

Public Health nurses began providing screening and immunization for Hepatitis to individuals who frequented the Mainline needle exchange program.

1999

The **“Western Region Outreach Project: It Costs Less to Fund a Needle Exchange Program than to Treat one Person for HIV/AIDS”** proposal was submitted to the HIV/AIDS Community Support Program to determine the need for needle exchange services in the Western Region of Nova Scotia.

In August, a new Caravan was donated to Mainline. This enabled two Mainline staff and the research statistical officer of the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS to travel across Canada and tour needle exchanges that offered low threshold methadone programs.

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 1999 – March 31, 2000
117,052



Diane Bailey & Essie Hickey

2000

Mainline received funding for the project **“Mainline Needle Exchange Provincial Outreach Needs Assessment”** to assess the need for needle exchange services in the Northern, Western and South Western Regions of Nova Scotia. The project sought to develop a quantitative and qualitative report, with information gathered from injection drug users and health and community support and service agencies. The goal was to create prevention education programs specific to injection drug users in each region and to assist in the development of services to address the identified issues.

Needles Dispensed

April 1, 2000 – March 31, 2001

96,933

“I would like to thank you for your contribution and participation during the celebrations, support organizations are an integral part of the successful reintegration of the inmates and you do make a difference in inmates’ lives”.

Warden from Dorchester Penitentiary

Mainline was invited to celebrate Dorchester Penitentiary’s 125th Anniversary (<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/facilit/institutprofiles/dorchester-eng.shtml>)

Ongoing conversation between Mainline and the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia found that many individuals who used drugs and were HIV positive were not accessing support or services. In response, John Arenburg, a support coordinator with the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia, began meeting with individuals to request HIV testing and support at Mainline’s location on Cornwallis Street.

The Provincial HIV/AIDS Strategy Steering Committee produced Nova Scotia’s Framework for Action on HIV/AIDS. This document contained 92 recommendations to act as a blueprint for developing a comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS.

The Mainline Methadone Program started in February 2000, and like the needle exchange, the methadone program took a harm reduction approach. Offering a methadone maintenance program was another step in the right direction to reduce the harms to people who use drugs. There was a marked decrease in the amount of needles dispensed by the Mainline needle exchange program in 2000 as a result of the introduction of the methadone program.



John Arenburg

The Nova Scotia Advisory Committee on AIDS (NSACA) prepared the report “Don’t Kid Yourself: Recommendations for Reducing HIV and Hepatitis Transmission in Nova Scotia”. The report showed that from January to August 1995, 223 new cases of active Hepatitis C and 22 new cases of Hepatitis B were reported in Federal prisons in Canada. In 1996, the number of new cases increased substantially: from January to April alone, 167 new cases of Hepatitis C and 19 cases of Hepatitis B were reported.

“Yeah, well don’t kid yourself and try to say that there is no drug problem, and Corrections is no different. If you can figure out some way to get clean syringes to people, I think you’re making a step in the right direction because when somebody catches AIDS out there, and they spread it, that’s a lot of money that they cost Canada; when you give them a 5 cent syringe. Don’t fool yourself”.

Former provincial inmate

2001

A proposal was submitted through Mainline entitled “**Direction 180 Education Project**” to establish a coordinated, community based education and support program for methadone clients. In February 2001, the Mainline Methadone Program was changed to the Direction 180 Methadone Program. The education project was funded by Health Canada.

Needles Dispensed

April 1, 2001 – March 31, 2002

110,919

Tommy Pottie has spent the last year travelling dark dirt roads and searching abandoned warehouses for intravenous drug users. He’s not a cop, but an outreach worker with the needle exchange in Halifax, trying to document the need for expanded services to help addicts in rural Nova Scotia. “You’ve got to find them or be told where they hang out and win their trust. It’s a lot of work, but it’s worth it to try and get an accurate picture of the problem”.

Herald Article, June 6, 2001

2002

The Cocaine Assessment Report, entitled “**An Inside Look into Cocaine Addiction Through the Eyes of an Addict**” developed a profile of the high-risk cocaine using population in Nova Scotia. The study aimed to develop a greater understanding of this population and to explore strategies that would assist in the enhancement or development of appropriate services. This project was funded by Health Canada.

Needles Dispensed

April 1, 2002 – March 31, 2003

153, 581

There was an increase in the amount on needles dispensed from 2002 to 2003 due to mobile outreach in the community.

2003

The **“Hepatitis C Youth Project”** emerged out of the findings of the Mainline Needle Exchange Provincial Needs Assessment. It indicated that there were approximately 30-35 youth in Pictou County who were self-reported injection drug users, and that half of these youth were positive for the Hepatitis C Virus. The project objective was to establish a coordinated education and peer support program for at-risk youth in Pictou County, and was funded by Health Canada.

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 2003 – March 31, 2004
256,984

Nova Scotia’s second Strategy on HIV/AIDS was launched by the provincial HIV/AIDS strategy steering committee with 19 recommendations under 4 strategic directions.

“I thought she was born for public speaking because she had the class entranced in her stories..... Arsenault’s compassion to help drug users shows why Mainline Needle Exchange is able to help so many.....there are literally no words to describe how I felt when I left class that Tuesday evening.

Be is a survivor of drug abuse, and all I can do is thank her for sharing her story with the class and wish her well with all her future endeavors”.

Students of HEED 2255: Drug and Drug Education



**Empowering People Who Use Illicit Drugs”
program participants**

The **“Empowering People Who Use Illicit Drugs”** program provided people who use illicit drugs access to accurate health information, programing, and support to build on inner strengths, alternatives to street life, and access to detox, treatment, and methadone programs. This program was funded by the Community Development Fund.

In 2003, Mainline Needle Exchange officially expanded its services to

Lunenburg and the surrounding area. Mainline and the Lunenburg Family Resource Centre developed a partnership to provide needle exchange services to individuals from the communities served by the Resource Centre. Due to the regional and provincial outreach, the number of needles dispensed increased significantly in 2003.

2004

In March 2004, Mainline received funding for the ***“Taking it to the Streets”*** project. The purpose of this project was to provide needle exchange services, general health education, peer support, and facilitate access to social and health services by travelling to specific areas in Halifax that were known for high drug use activity. The project goal was to improve access to health services that positively impact the health and well-being of drug users. This project was funded by Canadian Drug Strategy Initiative.

Needles Dispensed

April 1, 2004 – March 31, 2005

263, 228



**Gerald ‘Dink’ MacDonald
and Kathy Boudreau**

Mainline submitted a proposal to Health Canada for the ***“HIV/AIDS Kitpu Youth Project.”*** The goal of this project was to develop a peer support HIV/AIDS program in order to respond to the multiple needs and concerns of Aboriginal youth. A peer-led and culturally appropriate approach to HIV education holds the potential to be extremely influential in reducing HIV infection among this high-risk group of Aboriginal youth.

Mainline received funding for a one-year project, ***“Unsafe and Safer Practices among Injection Drug Users in DHAs 1,2,3 (DIDUP).”*** The purpose of this project was to increase knowledge of the contexts and situations in which risk taking behaviors occur among the injection drug users in District Health Authorities 1,2, & 3. The project also aimed to enhance existing services to the rural injection drug user population by building awareness of this

population and the risks associated with their drug use.

The Standards for Blood Borne Pathogens prevention Services in Nova Scotia were launched by the Department of Health.

(http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/publications/bbp_integrated_standards.pdf)

The Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada: Strengthening Federal Action in the Canadian Response to HIV/AIDS was launched by the Public Health Agency of Canada, replacing the CSHA (Canadian Strategy on HIV/AIDS).

2005

The Law Foundation of Nova Scotia funded the **“Community-Based Legal Support and Education Project.”** Mainline had been coordinating referrals and advocating for clients in need of legal assistance and other supports and this project was developed in response to an increased demand for these services.

This project delivered a legal support and education program, and created a network of stakeholders to promote community supports for individuals who are involved with the criminal justice system and/or at risk of incarceration.

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006
296, 096

“Dear Friends at Mainline, Thank you so much for your kind donation of “supplies”. You are a true community partner!”

Haley, AIDS New Brunswick

Recommendations were developed from the **“DHA Injection Drug Use Project (DIDUP),”** which began in 2004. The four broad recommendations related to the need for enhanced harm reduction services for high-risk drug users and aimed to reduce the risks of use, particularly the risks of contracting and transmitting communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and Tuberculosis.

The **“Mobile Community Outreach”** provided mobile needle exchange services, general health information, peer support, and facilitated access to social and health services by visiting specific areas in Halifax and the surrounding areas that were known for high risk drug use activity. This program was based on recommendations from the **“Taking it to the Streets”** project and was incorporated into core funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Health.



Kathy Boudreau and Be Arsenault

In 2005, the Street Involved Working Group was re-established with membership from Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services (APTS), the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia (ACNS), the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS (NSACA), Offender Health Services, Direction 180, HRM Police Department, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Halifax HIV Clinic, Phoenix Centre, Planned Parenthood, Shared Care Mental Health, Stepping Stone, Public Health Services, Capital District Health Authority, and Mainline. The group was re-established to oversee the **“Taking it to the Streets”** project and to identify key priorities. The main focus of these key priorities was to include a nursing component into the Mainline outreach program.

The Atlantic Interdisciplinary Network for HIV and Hepatitis C was formed to share information and coordinate research efforts to improve the quality of life of those affected by HIV and Hepatitis C, and to shape appropriate policy and program responses.

Information obtained from the interviews of the “Cocaine Assessment Report” led Mainline to distribute safer crack use kits to prevent users from sharing dirty smoke equipment and potentially spread disease. A November article in the Chronicle Herald, “Crack kits helping addicts but frustrating police” reported on Mainline’s addition of crack pipe distribution.

In 2005, the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland received funding from their provincial government to formalize a needle exchange program. (<http://www.acnl.net/>)



‘The Gang’ – Mainline Staff, Christmas, 2005

“For the past two days I helped out at Mainline Needle Exchange which was part of my Restorative Justice Agreement. To be honest I was extremely anxious to get my hours over and done with. However, after the first day I was excited to go back. It turned out to be very educational”.

Youth Restorative Justice

2006

The Ark, HRM (Halifax Regional Municipality), and Mainline partnered to produce a document entitled ***“The Drugs are Here: What are you going to do about it?”*** The project, which was funded by the HRM, assessed patterns of crystal meth and other drug use among street-involved youth in the HRM. The project sought to understand the underlying causes of drug use and homelessness, and to assess existing services, as well as potential service gaps.

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 2006– March 31, 2007
373,242

“Diane and Marion - You are both appreciated very much in our community, even though you may not be told that very often. Thanks for your commitment to our friends. May the peace of Christ be with you”

Dorothy Patterson, The Ark

The ***“Reducing the Risks: Crystal Meth Use Among Youth”*** project was developed to increase knowledge of the extent of crystal meth, other amphetamines, and other drug use among youth. The project aimed to increase knowledge of factors that put youth at-risk for HIV, Hepatitis C, and sexually transmitted infections and to improve and/or enhance health and social services for youth. The project was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada.



**Be Arsenault and Valerie
Strachan**

Mainline partnered with the School of Health and Human Performance and School of Social Work, Dalhousie University; Faculty of Nursing, University of New Brunswick; Sharp Advice Needle Exchange (Cape Breton); AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador; AIDS Saint John, and AIDS PEI for the project *“Social networks and safer/unsafe sexual and injection drug use practices among IDUs in rural and urban Atlantic Canada”*. The study interviewed injection drug users in urban and rural areas of Atlantic Canada. The goal of the study was to explore how injection drug users social relationships influenced their safer or unsafe sexual and/or injection drug use practices.

“We want to go on record as fully supporting Mainline Services on Gottingen Street. We are proud to have you as neighbours, not only for the valuable work that you do, but also because the people who do the work and the people who benefit from it are an asset to the community. You help to keep people safe. You offer people support when they may have no other. You help people help themselves and get their lives back. Thank you for doing this. ”

Donna Franey, Director, Dalhousie Legal Aid Services

A Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Mainline *“In Recognition of Your Invaluable Support and Commitment to Direction 180”* in June 2006.

Mainline submitted a proposal to the Halifax Assistance Fund for a project entitled ***“Vittles and Bits”***. The project reached out to a variety of marginalized populations, including people who used drugs, people who were HIV or Hepatitis B/C infected or at-risk of becoming HIV or Hepatitis B/C infected, people who were homeless, people who had significant mental health issues, people who were poly-drug addicted, and people who had difficulty accessing food services.

“It is strong community partners like you who make our region a safer place to live, work, and play. Within Halifax Regional Municipality, we believe that “good neighbors make for great neighbourhoods” and your staff at Mainline Needle Exchange continuously demonstrate that this is the case.”

Frank Beazley, Chief of Police

In August, Diane was nominated by the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection for the 1st Inaugural Capital District Community Leadership Award.

2007

Mainline received funding from the 2007 Community Innovation Program for the **“Barriers to HIV Testing in Rural Communities”** project. This project aimed to increase knowledge and skills of safer practices among drug users, the capacity of rural drug users to access and receive HIV testing, and partnerships among stakeholders in rural Nova Scotia.

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 2007– March 31, 2008
409,347

The Halifax Assistance Fund provided funding for the **“Vittles & Bits & More”** project. This project was a continuance of the **“Vittles & Bits”** project established in 2006. It continued to provide nutritional food and information related to social services and health care to street-involved individuals with mental health and/or addiction issues, a lack of access to housing, food, social supports, healthcare, and community supports.

A Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Mainline Needle Exchange “For Continued Support in Providing Meaningful Work for Our Youth” from the Community Justice Society in April, 2007.

“This is health to us, these people have smoked crack before. We’re not trying to promote drug use. We’re trying to keep it safe.”

Diane Bailey, NovaNewsnet

2008

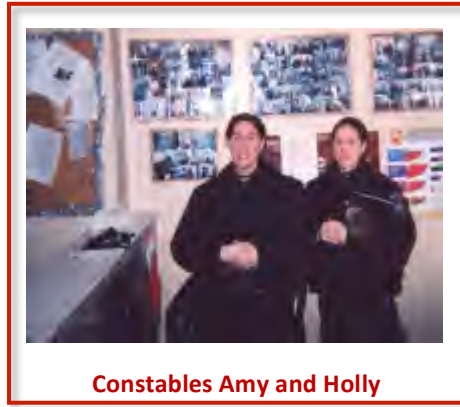


**Joanne Parker, Lois Jackson,
 Diane Bailey and Cindy MacIsaac**

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 2008– March 31, 2009
377,099

Diane was nominated by Dr. Lois Jackson, of the School of Health and Human Performance at Dalhousie University, and was a recipient of the 2008 Women of Excellence Award.

A partnership was developed with a Community Response Office in the Gottingen Street/Uniacke Square areas and Mainline to meet the residents of the area and connect with them on a personal level.



Constables Amy and Holly

2009

Drug treatment courts, which are judicially mandated treatment alternatives to the incarceration of illicit drug offenders, were introduced in Canada in 1998. Students from Dalhousie developed a position paper with Mainline entitled, ***“Drug Treatment Courts (DTC): The Next Development for Halifax”***. The paper outlined how drug treatment courts worked in other cities such as Vancouver and Toronto, addressed the need for drug treatment courts in Halifax, and provided an execution plan for the development of a drug treatment court in Halifax, including Mainline’s involvement with the project.

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 2009– March 31, 2010
377,099

Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH) started as a frontline primary health care service to provide prevention and basic health care to shelters, community centres and soup kitchens. “For a long time we have been impressed with the work and trail blazing Mainline has done. The principles by which Mainline offers service informed much of how the Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH) offers our service and care. MOSH was not even defined a number of years ago when Diane Bailey bravely got people together to talk about the concerns she and her staff were seeing on outreach. They were meeting people who yes were using IVD but they were also people with diabetes, Hepatitis C, epilepsy, cancer and more. She felt there needed to be a more accessible service for people whose lives were so affected by their use to get primary health care. Diane along with other community and government agencies championed and saw the development of the first primary health care outreach in Atlantic Canada to people who suffer with addictions, who are homeless, street involved, or marginally housed. The MOSH team works closely with Mainline, we are out together 3 times a week and consult with each other over trends in the community but most importantly see ourselves as one as we try to collectively improve the quality of life of the people we serve. MOSH could not provide the care we do without the help of Mainline. Mainline is a trusted service in our community and MOSH rides on the coat tails of that trust {If you are with Mainline you must be OK}. We are thankful for all the staff at Mainline has taught us even the driving lessons and our respect for the program is endless”.

Happy Birthday Mainline, love, the MOSH gang



Jamie Williams, John Arenburg, Margot Dechenne and Patti Melanson

Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH) is a front-line primary healthcare services that began operating in 2009. The MOSH van was the brainchild of Diane Bailey and Patti Melanson and a joint project between the provincial government and several corporate and community organizations.

In September, a Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Mainline from the Community Justice Society "In Recognition of Outstanding Volunteer Service Benefiting Our Community".

2010

The "Halifax Withdrawal Management Programs: Where do we go from here?" project was initiated by Mainline in partnership with students from the Social Work Practice Research Program at Dalhousie University. The purpose of this project was to provide an overview of the current withdrawal management options in Halifax, and outlined the need for alternative and enhanced detoxification services.

In 2010, with increased funding from the provincial government for needle exchange programs, SWAP Needle Exchange opened in Corner Brook, Newfoundland.

(<http://www.thetelegram.com/Arts---Life/Health/2010-03-29/article-1439288/SWAP-reaching-out/1>)

Needles Dispensed
April 1, 2010– March 31, 2011
501,327



Margot Dechenne and Hal 'The Hand' Hatfield

Students from the School of Health Administration at Dalhousie University developed a project entitled “Cost Effectiveness of Mainline Needle Exchange Program, Halifax”. The project determined whether providing a needle exchange program to prevent HIV transmission among injection drug users would cost less than the health care consequences of not having such a program. The analysis demonstrated that the Mainline Needle Exchange Program is cost effective and reduces healthcare costs by reducing HIV infection among injection drug users.

“We would like to thank you, James and Greg for coming to our school and letting us interview you on various aspects of your organization. Your honesty and passion about your work is very insightful, and I believe it would be hard to face the failures that outweigh the successes, but you have passion that is necessary in the field and is a hallmark of great helper”.

Students, Upper Musquodoboit School

2011

Mainline received funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada for the “Hep C & Me” project. This project aimed to improve the understanding of current gaps in service delivery related to Hepatitis C prevention, and to address remaining barriers and challenges to Hepatitis C prevention through

collaboration. The project targeted individuals who used illicit drugs, were poly-drug addicted, had experienced homelessness, were street involved, were engaged in the sex trade, had significant mental health issues, were HIV or Hepatitis B/C infected or at risk of becoming HIV or Hepatitis B/C infected, and individuals incarcerated in provincial or federal institutions. The project also collaborated with health and community services that met other basic needs of these individuals.

Needles Dispensed

April 1, 2011– March 31, 2012

553,633

“Kathy - I hope you realize how much we appreciate you coming to do your program with us. It’s so nice to see someone that has been there and it gives us hope that we can beat this addiction one day at a time. Don’t ever give up on us, we get stronger every week with the program you provide. It is an honour to be in this program from Mainline we appreciate you. Thank you for your help”

Girls at Halifax Correctional Facility

The mantra of harm reduction, repeated by health organizations for years, is slowing starting to catch on in society at large, says some Haligonians. Instead of ignoring drug use, goes the theory, accept that it happens. Instead of locking up or shunning addicts, try to make their lives a little safer improving their health and future prospects.

“Dealing with drug use, more businesses installing syringe disposal boxes” Selena Ross, Chronicle Herald, Nov 26/11

Mainline and Direction 180 were project sites for the national “I Track study: Enhanced Surveillance of Risk Behaviours among People Who Inject Drugs in Canada”, completed by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The purpose of the study was to learn about the problems and needs of people who inject drugs and to help people who inject drugs protect themselves from diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C. The project aimed to find out how many people were sharing needles or having unprotected sex, and how many people were infected with HIV and/or Hepatitis C across Canada.

“Mainline and MOSH joint services are crucial, as injection drug users account for 18 percent of HIV cases in Canada, and over a quarter of those living with HIV/AIDS don’t know they’ve contracted the disease. When MOSH began in 2009, they gained the community’s trust by working closely with Mainline Needle Exchange. “

The Coast December 2011

2012: Mainline Present

As a community organization, Mainline works closely with populations throughout mainland Nova Scotia who engage in risky behaviors such as injection drug use, cocaine/crack use, and sex trade work. Many of these individuals are inadequately housed and/or homeless, are involved in methadone maintenance programs, have significant mental health issues, are often unemployed or have less than adequate income, and do not access health care services.

Mainline is dedicated to supporting current and former drug users through harm reduction programs by raising awareness of the harms associated with drug-using behaviors including the sharing of needles, syringes and other drug using supplies. Mainline provides awareness and education on harm reduction, particularly safer injection and sexual practices. Furthermore, Mainline provides peer support and assistance with exploring and accessing detox and methadone treatment, as well as legal, social, and housing services.

Mainline is currently partnering with DPRA consulting company on a monitoring survey project entitled “Health Canada Monitoring of Alcohol and Drug Use among High Risk Populations”.

Mainline has grown into an established health promotion organization. Mainline provides services through a fixed location on Cornwallis Street and through regional and provincial mobile outreach projects. Mainline is a vital fixture in the North End of Halifax and an invaluable resource for marginalized individuals across mainland Nova Scotia.

Mainline also offered their staffing services towards a new innovative 'Interim Methadone Program' that will open its doors to address the overwhelming waitlist for methadone treatment to over 50 people. The work and values of the Mainline Needle Exchange Program are cherished by staff and clients of Direction 180, other community-based programs as well as those living in silence with substance dependency.

Dear Diane,

Congratulations as you celebrate these 20 years recognizing your faithfulness, beauty, consistency, and care. You've inspired many (me) to believe in and care deeply for this community. I won't be there in person, but in heart.

Love, Dorothy- Celebrate!

As we move forward into the future, it is our wish for:

- **Community Detox Programs**

Alternative and enhanced detoxification programs are required to address the variety of needs within service user and service provider populations alike. Municipal, provincial and federal governments should reevaluate the effectiveness of the current withdrawal management programs and examine the benefits of redistributing funds to enhance future programming. *(From the research paper, Halifax Withdrawal management programs: Where do we go from here?, prepared by Dalhousie Social Work students).*

- **Drug Treatment Courts (DTC)**

DTCs currently exist in other parts of Canada and in many places in the United States. The courts are based largely on the relationship between crime and drug addiction. The drug user will be sentenced to an addiction treatment program to create a change in themselves, rather than a prison system that enforces punishment. Punishment and seclusion is not the solution for people with addiction: an opportunity to change is. *(From a position paper advocating for the necessary help to develop a DTC in Halifax prepared by Dalhousie students and supported by Mainline Needle Exchange).*

- **Safe Injection Sites**

Including safe injection facilities as one harm reduction component of a broader policy response to injection drug use is likely to produce significant benefits for both drug users and the general community. Safe injection sites are places in which drug users are able to inject safer using clean equipment under the supervision of medically trained personnel. These sites also help to direct drug users to treatment and rehabilitation programs and can operate as a source of primary health care. The facilities are intended to reduce incidents of unsafe use of injection drugs and to prevent the negative consequences that too often result from unsafe injection.

(From the article Establishing safe injection facilities in Canada: Legal and ethical issues by Richard Elliott, Ian Malkin, and Jennifer Gold)

- More nursing available through MOSH

MOSH has been able to provide primary health care and other support to a significant number of people who use intravenous drugs in Halifax. With help from their relationship with Mainline, MOSH has gained the trust of this population. The care MOSH provides has included treatment of abscesses, Hepatitis C care and referrals, and vaccinations for flu and Hepatitis A and B. Having MOSH more available going to different pockets of the entire HRM and being able to provide health care in partnership with Mainline's central outreach program would significantly contribute to the harm reduction approach provided by both organizations.

- More methadone spaces

Direction 180 has assessed and/or treated 560 individuals. They currently have 280 people in treatment and up to 200 on the waiting list. Direction 180 is now developing a modest, interim model of methadone maintenance to help mitigate the risks of opiate dependence. Their hope is to create a circle of collaborative partnerships whose skills, resources and knowledge can lend support or referrals to other health and ancillary services in the community.

Over the past 20 years the Micmac Native Friendship Centre has been extremely honored and proud to administer the Mainline Needle Exchange Program. The needle exchange was first established to provide clean needles to the drug using community but shortly developed into a comprehensive prevention and harm reduction program.

On behalf of the Friendship Centre I would like to offer my congratulations to Diane and the staff of Mainline for their tireless work with some of the province's most vulnerable populations, their continued advocacy in bringing coalitions of organizations together and their dedication to providing the best possible services that impact the wellbeing and quality of life of individuals who frequent the needle exchange.

"Eymutijik kinapk ta'n eymutik – kinapk iknmuksi'k mu ejiklatuksuk kokwey, ika'npukuitajik ag me'lki, ika'naturij ta'n telotik onaka, mu ta'n tel we'ljaqoltijik nekmuk."

(There are heroes among us – heroes give instead of take, they act instead of talk, the step forward and do the hard and unseen jobs, they give of themselves, measuring their own success not by wealth or comfort but by the lives they touch along the way.)

Yours in Friendship,

Pamela Glode-Desrochers

Executive Director, Micmac Native Friendship Centre

Mainline Staff

Diane Bailey



Diane started as a part time worker in 1992 and shortly after became program director. She has co-managed, developed, and managed 18 funded projects, was a co-investigator on 2 projects, and has worked on 2 published projects. She has been called the 'heart and soul of Mainline,' a leader, a counselor, a friend, an advocate, and a manager. Diane attributes this to her 20+ years of street experience, 3 years of methadone treatment, and 22 years of recovery. Diane has demonstrated community leadership over her many years at Mainline. Diane was nominated for the 1st inaugural Capital District Community Leadership Award and was the recipient of the 2008 Progress Women of Excellence Award.

Kathy Boudreau



Kathy has been in recovery for 13 years. Her ongoing commitment to the community based legal & education support project has been beneficial in supporting individuals who are involved with the criminal justice system and/or at risk of incarceration. She had previously worked at Barry House, a shelter for homeless women and children; and Coverdale, an organization supporting women in conflict with the law. Kathy has assisted on the "An Inside Look into Cocaine Addiction, Through the Eyes of an Addict: Mainline Needle Exchange Cocaine Assessment Report" project. Kathy was the founder of the Freedom and Empowerment for Women Recovery Group, co-founder of the self-help Go Girls group and president of the Greystone Tenant Association.

John Arenburg



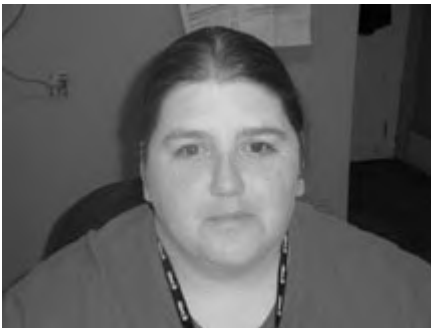
John is a central outreach worker at Mainline. John was previously the project coordinator for the “Reducing the Risks: Crystal Methamphetamine & other Drug Use among Youth in Halifax” project and was a writer for the Barriers to HIV testing in rural communities project. John has numerous years of experience working in the HIV/AIDS community: he was the support coordinator for the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia (ACNS) for 5 years and was co-chair for the Community Advocates Network for 3 years. John has a wide range of experience in HIV/AIDS work which he attributes to his 25 years of being HIV+ and going strong. John lives with his three cats Socks, Bobby and May.

Essie Hickey



Essie began working with Mainline in 1994 as a site worker. Her dedication as a community methadone board member since 1994 and her real life experience with methadone maintenance were instrumental in the establishment of the Direction 180 low threshold methadone program. She eventually left Mainline to work at Direction 180 and was also appointed to the board of the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS. Essie also worked at the Stepping Stone Association as an outreach worker. Essie co-authored Mainline's "Children of Drug Addicted Parents" project and was the original project coordinator for the Mainline Needs Assessment Project. She has recently returned to Mainline and works actively at the site and on the central and provincial outreach programs.

Kary Hannan



Kary is the newest member of the Mainline staff, and she also provides maintenance work at the direction 180 methadone program. As a Cape Bretoner she has an incredible amount of loyalty, dedication and humour. She brings a wealth of experience and passion to help others struggling with addiction: her years of street life in Glace Bay, commitment to the Narcotics Anonymous program, and her 3 years on the methadone program at Direction 180 is an asset to Mainline and the population we serve.

Elaine Williams



Elaine Williams is a mother of four and grandmother to four beautiful grandchildren. She worked in the hotel industry for 18 years, and worked for five years with the Restorative Justice Black Pilot Project for youth at risk of offending. Elaine volunteers as Chair of the Mulgrave Park Tenants Association and is a board member with the Mulgrave Park Caring and Learning Centre. She also assists with the Mulgrave Park Community Food Bank and the breakfast program. Her activities also include being a member of the Metro Regional Housing Authority, previous membership with the School Advisory Committee for Highland Park, St. Joseph's A Mackay Schools, and the Northern Lantern Festival in North End Halifax. Elaine's selfless giving to her community makes her a wonderful addition to our outreach program.

Jamie Williams



Jamie has been working at Mainline since 2006. He started on the central outreach vehicle, and shortly after began on the provincial outreach vehicle. Jamie also provides relief work at the site. He spent twenty years in the non-profit sector at Veith House, a neighborhood community centre; Dartmouth Boys & Girls Club; Halifax Police Boys Club; and the North end Community Daycare. Jamie currently works with youth at George Dixon Community Centre and the Halifax Super Tiger Cats.

Tom Pottie



Tom has spent numerous years involved in street life and many more years in prison. In 2002, he was employed at Mainline as the project coordinator for the Provincial Needs Assessment Project. Again his life took many turns up and down, and after 4 years recovery he decided to return to school for his academic 12, attend School of Theology and practice in prison ministry and addictions. Tom is extremely grateful and wants to be able to give back some of what he has received in the past few years. Presently Tom is working at Mainline as an outreach worker, volunteering at the IWK with the child protection team, and is a proud member of the NA program.

What an amazing journey!

**Yes, Mainline, you have done an incredible
job. Happy 20th anniversary and many
more.....**

*Lastly, to the many clients who have trusted us in their lives, "you are the reason we can celebrate this occasion - we could never have done this without you" - **Thank You.***

mainline
1992-2012