

POLICIES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND CARE: PROGRESS IN ACCESS AND ADDICTION TREATMENT FOR PWUDs IN GREECE



Avgerinos N², Trakakis A³, Theocharis A.¹

¹ President of Board of Directors, Organization Against Drugs (OKANA), Greece

² Deputy Director of Programs Implementation, Organization Against Drugs (OKANA), Greece

³ PhD, Senior Advisor, Organization Against Drugs (OKANA), Greece

Background

Greece has made significant strides in addressing addiction through a comprehensive, people-centered, and holistic approach. Policies have been tailored to tackle the numerous challenges encountered by persons who use drugs, encompassing the prevention and treatment of contagious diseases like HIV and HCV, averting overdose cases, providing access to treatment with no exclusions, and tackling homelessness. All interventions are tailored to meet the diverse needs of patients. The key initiatives to that holistic and people-centered approach and their positive outcomes are presented.

Key Initiatives in Greece

- Establishment of the first Drug consumption room (DCR) in Athens, Greece
- Establishment of the first Mobile DCR in Thessaloniki, Greece
- Expansion of Naloxone use legislation
- Day Centers and Shelter to tackle homelessness
- Escape Project of the European Union Drugs Agency
- Tityos program
- Enhanced Streetwork actions

DCR's in Greece

Stable DCR in Athens (2 years and 2 months in operation)

- 12 spaces for safe injectable and/or inhaling use
- a waiting room for the beneficiaries of DCR services
- a fully equipped outpatient primary healthcare clinic and overdose treatment
- and a room for counseling and psychological support

54,102 total visits for supervised use

1,944 individual registered persons

Mobile DCR in Thessaloniki (1 month in operation)

- 2 seats for injectable or inhaling use
- Primary Healthcare services
- Referrals to other facilities or treatment programs
- Psychosocial support

2,091 contacts with beneficiaries

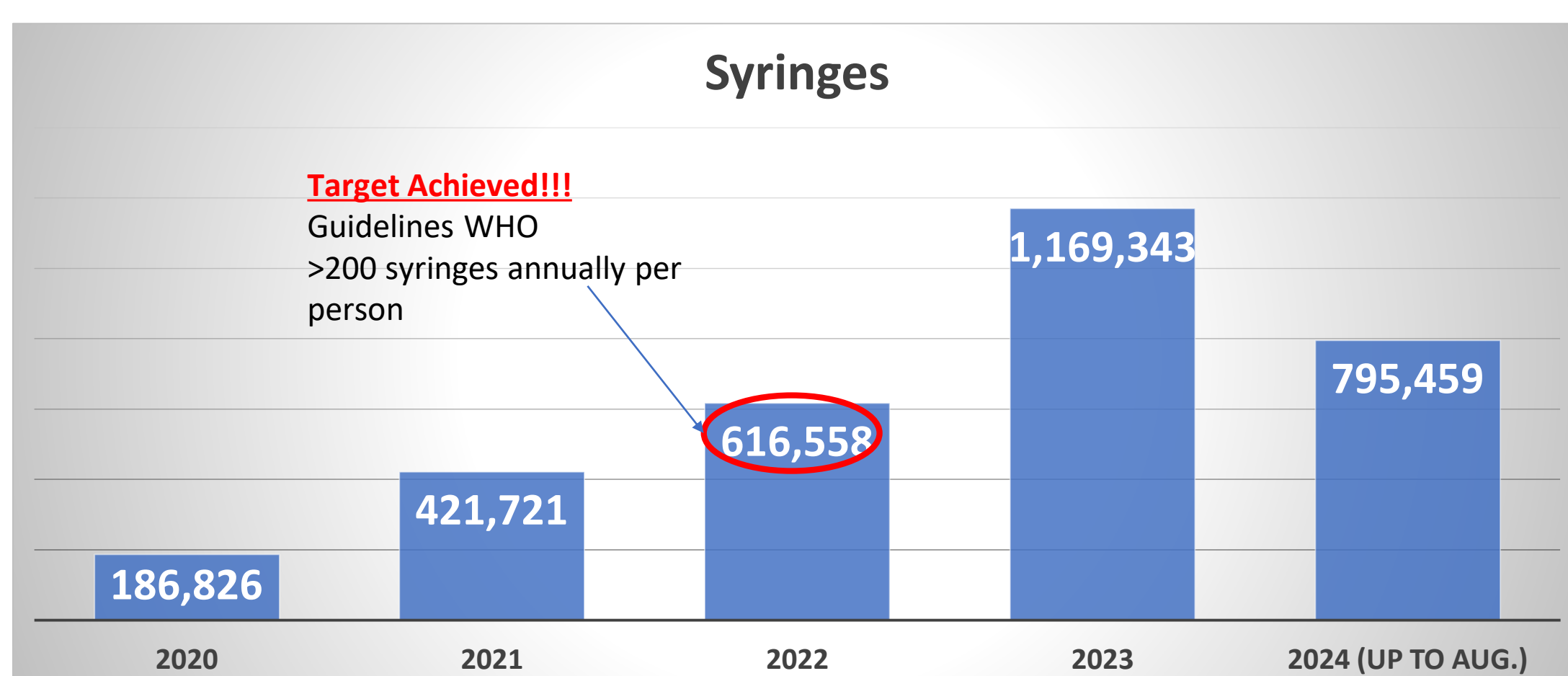
1,201 distributed KIT

79 individuals received primary healthcare services

454 beneficiaries in total

Syringes distributed // Escape Project // Naloxone // Day Center – Hostel // Tityos Program

Distributions of Syringes per Year: Streetwork actions



Naloxone

2022 - To date:

285 overdose cases have been successfully treated using Naloxone

From 2023, Naloxone can be administered all!!!

Tityos: The 1st Greek Hepatitis C Elimination Program

All beneficiaries of the organization's OST programs who have HCV have been monitored

Access to treatment within 1 year.

The program will prevent **180 cirrhosis**, **82 cases of hepatocellular carcinoma** and **26 deaths** by 2028.

Savings of **8 million** in the health system by 2028.



>90% (WHO guidelines)

Beneficiaries OKANA	6.366	
AntiHCV test	6.145	96,5%
AntiHCV +ve	4.075	66,3%
HCV RNA	3.128	76,8%
HCV RNA +	2.404	76,8%
Prescribed Treatment	2.099	87,3%
Treated	1.229	58,5%

23,2% pending for checking



>80% (WHO guidelines)

ESCAPE Project: Syringe residues analysis

1,131 syringes from **Athens, Thessaloniki, Patra, Heraklion, and Volos!!**

Purpose: To study the substances contained in the syringes, to identify new trends in drug substances and to determine the extent of use.



ARISTOTLE
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE

Conclusion

OKANA's holistic approach, grounded in people-centered interventions, has yielded promising results. **Current data highlight the effectiveness of this strategy and support the need for a comprehensive response to addiction.** Future efforts will focus on enhancing harm reduction, treatment, and social reintegration. Through innovative strategies, Greece aims to sustain progress in promoting the well-being of individuals facing addiction.

