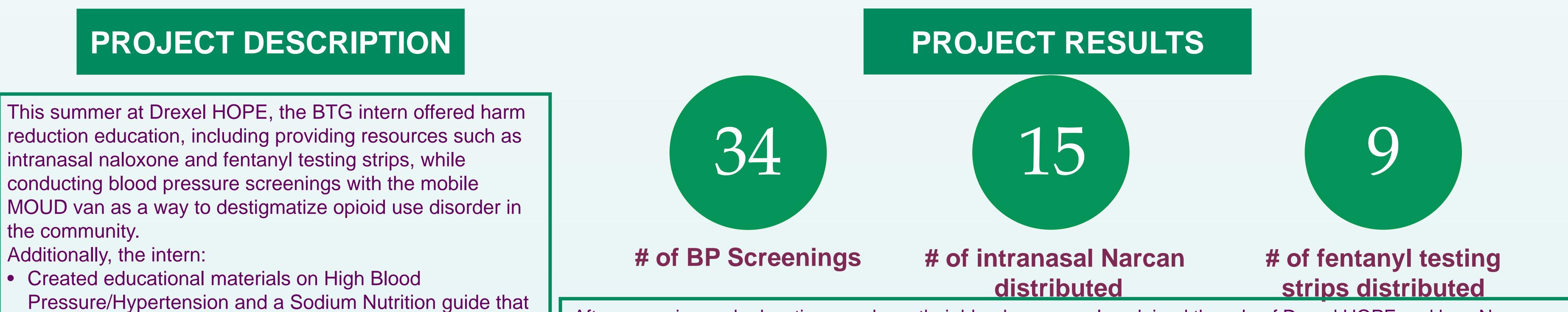


Utilizing blood pressure screenings to introduce harm reduction to the community

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## DREXEL HOPE (HEALTH, OUTREACH, PARTNERSHIP, EMPOWERMENT)

Drexel HOPE (Health, Outreach, Partnership, Empowerment) is a multidisciplinary mobile linkage program offering medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) for individuals struggling with opioid use disorder (OUD) with a focus on African American and Hispanic individuals. Based on opioid-related opioid overdose death data from the city of Philadelphia, Drexel HOPE has been operating in West and South Philadelphia. Drexel HOPE offers low-threshold health care at low or reduced cost to make services more accessible to underserved patients and promote health equity. (https://drexelmedicine.org/patient-services/partnership-comprehensive-care-practice/drexel-hope/)



After screening and educating people on their blood pressure, I explained the role of Drexel HOPE and how Narcan can be

- were straight-forward and accessible.
- Completed various online trainings and webinars on topics pertaining to the treatment of those with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), including a DEA X-Waiver training in order to be eligible to apply for a waiver to prescribe buprenorphine
- Attended weekly HOPE staff meetings and set up meetings with BTG interns at other sites to help facilitate connections and partnerships to promote Drexel HOPE's services.

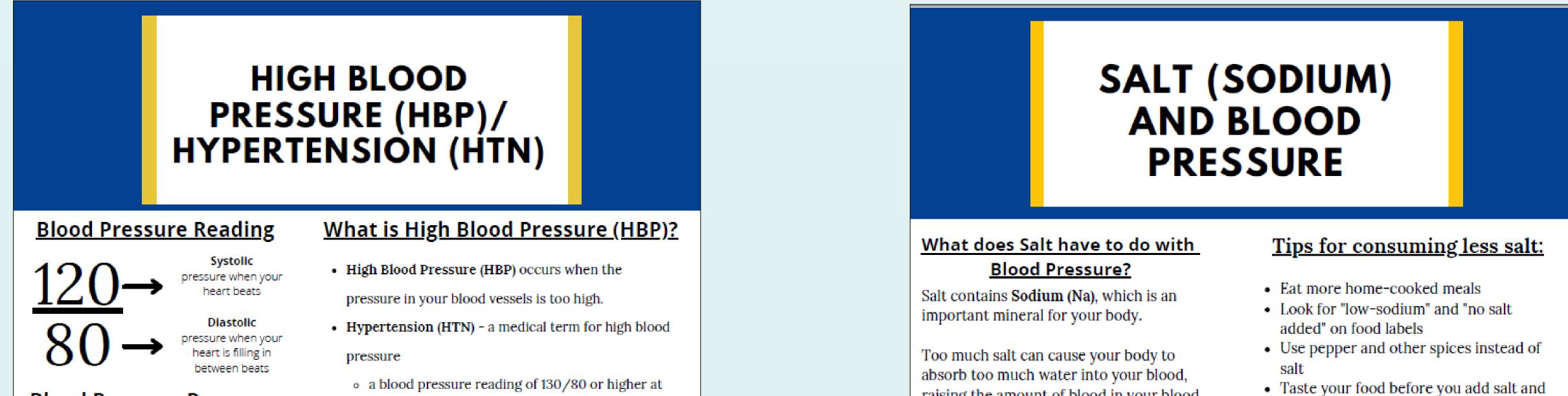
used when they are concerned someone may have overdosed on opioids. I educated them on the signs of an overdose, how to use Narcan, and how fentanyl present in the drug supply is contributing to the increase in overdose deaths. According to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, there were 1,214 drug overdoses in Philadelphia in 2020 and 86% of overdose fatalities involved opioids. Fentanyl was involved in 81% of all drug overdose deaths in 2020. Also during this period, the number of ODs among non-Hispanic Black individuals increased by 29%, while the number of ODs among non-Hispanic White individuals decreased by 10%.

Of the people getting their BP checked, less than 50% were given Narcan. While some were already familiar with Narcan and had it on hand, the majority of people who refused Narcan cited that they did not use opioids nor did they know anyone who used opioids. My goal was to convey the importance of how opioid use is widespread in the community and address this stigma by saying they could come across someone who has overdosed when they are out and even on the SEPTA.

# REFLECTION

My summer working with Drexel HOPE opened my eyes to the importance of educating the community about Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) in order to dispel common misperceptions. During my Storytelling Project, I learned that one of the common barriers for those with OUD to start treatment is the fear of judgement. I also came across stigma when I tried to convey to the community the value of carrying Narcan. My time with Bridging the Gaps helped me to understand how I should be an advocate for those impacted by OUD. If people could see that carrying around Narcan should be as normal and common as carrying hand sanitizer, perhaps people with OUD wouldn't be fearful of judgement when trying to get help. Harm reduction education needs to continue to be a part of the medical school curriculum and all physicians need to be able to address substance use disorder (SUD) with their patients and should be able to prescribe MOUD (buprenorphine) regardless of what specialty they practice.

## FRONT PAGES OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS



### **Blood Pressure Ranges**

BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120 – 129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130 – 139	or	80 - 89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR Higher
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and /or	HIGHER Than 120

- - least two times.
- Signs of HTN: silent most of the time. If you
- experience severe headaches, blurry vision,
- shortness of breath, you should seek medical

## attention.

### Untreated High Blood Pressure can Lead to:

- Heart Disease and Heart Attack Stroke
- Heart Failure Kidney Disease

Too much blood in your blood vessels

You should aim to consume no more than

results in high blood pressure.

1,500mg of salt per day if you are

Pressure (HBP).

concerned you may have High Blood

- raising the amount of blood in your blood vessels.
  - salt it in small amounts When looking at premade meals, less ingredients is better



PUT IN PERSPECTIVE: 1 package of instant Ramen noodles contains 1,760mg sodium Canned soup has an average of 700 mg sodium 1 large slice of store-bought frozen pizza contains about 765mg sodium 18-inch flour tortilla contains roughly 400mg sodium

heart.org