U.S. communities had **limited access to drug prevention services** at local health departments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Methodology**
We examined six surveys, collected from pre- to mid-pandemic:
- 2016, 2019 Profile studies (RR=76%, 61%)
- 2018, 2020 Forces of Change (RR=61%, 29%)
- 2019, 2021 Injury & Violence Prevention (RR=51%, 26%)

Descriptive statistics were generated to examine trends.

**Results**
Before the pandemic, the proportion of LHDs providing some level of substance use prevention services was increasing, and many were expanding their level of provision. During the pandemic, 65% of LHDs reduced their level of service provision, but the proportion providing some level of services remained steady.

**Conclusion**
Policy recommendations to mitigate the risk of service disruptions during future public health emergencies include direct and flexible funding for LHDs and federal directives declaring substance use prevention services as essential to limit the reallocation of resources.

**Introduction**
COVID-19 dramatically limited the scale and scope of local health department (LHD) work, redirecting resources to the response. However, the need for essential public health services—including substance use prevention—was not reduced.

**Purpose**
Using survey data between 2016 and 2021, we explored how the availability of LHD substance use prevention and response services shifted during the pandemic, as well as how public health agencies initially responded to service disruptions.

**Fig 1. Changes in level of substance use service provision over time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Service was needed</th>
<th>Service was offered</th>
<th>Service was cost</th>
<th>COVID-19 did not affect</th>
<th>Did not offer service (N/A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig 2. Changes in substance use services resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and associated safety regulations**

- **Family counseling**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Peer navigation**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Detox programs**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Fentanyl testing**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Syringe service programs**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Off-site responders**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Kanabas distribution/education**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Peer support group**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Neonatal abstinence syndrome**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Linkages to care**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **MVHD**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Community re-entry programs**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Community education/outreach**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Medication takeback events**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Academic detailing**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Housing assistance**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Adalheid NACCHO**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **MVETI testing**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Antigenic campaigns**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Crisis hotline**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

- **Syringe litter drop boxes**
  - Service was needed: 11/10
  - Service was offered: 11/10
  - Service was cost: 10/10
  - COVID-19 did not affect: 10/10
  - Did not offer service (N/A): 10/10

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