

## Xylazine and Access to Health Care

- **Access to health care:** a social determinant of health that is critical for reducing health inequities in our communities
- **Xylazine** is a veterinary sedative being introduced to Cincinnati's illicit drug supply. Ingestion of this drug can lead to dangerous necrotic wounds and risk for overdose.
- Access to drug-checking equipment is emerging as an essential public health service. This includes utilizing test strips to identify a contaminated drug supply.

## Community Impact of Xylazine

- On a national scale, overdoses involving xylazine increased 273% between 2019-2022.
- In a survey of Ohio drug users, 73% indicated they did not want to use xylazine and 53% were unaware that xylazine was present in "street drugs."
- Xylazine test strips have demonstrated high sensitivity (100%), specificity (85%), and precision (91%).

## Policy Status in Cincinnati

- Ohio Section 2925.14 covers law regarding drug paraphernalia.
  - Knowingly using paraphernalia or possessing paraphernalia with a purpose to use it is a misdemeanor of the fourth degree.
  - As of April 2023, excludes drug testing strips to determine presence of fentanyl or fentanyl-related compound as paraphernalia.
  - There are no exclusions currently for xylazine test strips.

## Rationale for Policy Modification

- A survey of people who inject drugs in Rhode Island found that a positive fentanyl test strip resulted in safer usage behaviors.
- Expanding the use of xylazine test strips in our communities could help decrease its harmful effects on those who are ingesting it unknowingly, as was seen with fentanyl.

## Proposed Advocacy Strategy

- Using data-driven advocacy and personal testimonials, we hope to engage legislators and draft an updated exemption to Section 2925.14.
- **We ask for support and co-sponsorship to amend Section 2925.14 D4 to exclude xylazine test strips.**