



REPORT TO COUNCIL

City of Sacramento

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Staff Report
August 6, 2009

**Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council**

Title: Annual Report to the Sacramento City Council on Access to Clean Syringes Programs

Location/Council District: City-wide

Recommendation: 1) Receive and File the second annual report on Access to Clean Syringes Programs in the City of Sacramento

Contact: Glennah Trochet M.D., Sacramento County Public Health Officer,
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Presenters: Glennah Trochet M.D., Sacramento County Public Health Officer

Department: Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services

Division: Public Health

Description/Analysis

Issue: In November 2006, the Mayor and City Council approved the over-the-counter pharmacy sales of clean syringes in the City of Sacramento. And in January 2007 the City of Sacramento Mayor and City Council authorized the operation of clean syringe exchange programs in the City of Sacramento. The ordinances required an annual report detailing the status of the programs. This report includes information on blood borne infections associated with needle sharing activities, as well as a description of the implementation of both programs and known outcomes as of December, 2008.

In Sacramento, the use of illegal drugs and sharing of syringes is the second most common way in which HIV is transmitted and the most common in which Hepatitis C is transmitted. From the beginning of the epidemic in 1982 until December, 2008, Sacramento County has recorded 3,654 cases of AIDS. Of these 79 % (2,896) were living in the City of Sacramento at the time of the report. As of the end of 2008 there were 1,331 cases of HIV reported in the county, of these, 78% (1,032) lived in the City of Sacramento at the time the report was made.

It is estimated that 600,000 people in California are infected with Hepatitis C. If this is so, then we project that 22,100 people in Sacramento County must also be infected. In 2008 there were 2,621 new cases of Hepatitis C reported in Sacramento County. Of these, 946 cases reported in 2008 lived within the City of Sacramento limits. From 2007 to 2008 there was a three-fold increase in reports of Hepatitis C chronic carriers to the Health Department. This is believed to be due to an increase in case finding and awareness within the medical community and the public.

Disease Prevention Demonstration Project (DPDP): Disease Prevention Demonstration Project (DPDP):

There are **twenty-four** registered pharmacies that continued to participate in the project in the City of Sacramento in 2008. The participants are fourteen Rite Aid pharmacies, four Longs Drugs pharmacies, five Leader pharmacies, and the Center for AIDS Research and Education Services (CARES) pharmacy.

The most recent survey conducted with the DPDP Pharmacies indicated there have been few if any incidents/concerns attributable to the DPDP project. The survey also shows that all locations are selling at least 10 syringes per month, and most are averaging 100-500 syringes a month. According to the responses received, pharmacists have referred customers to drug and alcohol services, provided verbal consultation to customers regarding appropriate needle use and treatment availability. The pharmacies also provide sharps containers to customers for purchase. Several pharmacists requested additional signage/promotional materials for the program and the majority indicated that they would like additional educational materials to provide to customers. The Division of Public Health is able to provide these to the pharmacies who requested them.

Syringe Exchange Programs: Two Syringe Exchange programs are in place in the City of Sacramento. Harm Reduction Services (HRS) is a community based organization that works with high risk clients providing education, prevention and HIV and Hepatitis C testing. Their clients include current drug users, men who have sex with men, sex workers and the homeless. Of their clients, 55% are male and 45% female. They range from 25 to 45 years of age, and approximately 45% are people of color.

Clean syringes for exchange, and testing services, are available at their office Tuesday through Friday from 10 am to 1 pm. and Saturday from 11 am to 5 pm. Also, the HRS outreach van conducts street based services three afternoons a week from 1 to 4:30 pm. and Saturday evenings from 10 pm to 1 am at various locations in the City of Sacramento. HRS staff collects used syringes during outreach contacts. Biohazard waste containers are provided to participants when possible.

HRS hosts the Joan Viteri Memorial Clinic (JVMC) in partnership with the UC Davis Medical School. The clinic's services include abscess treatment, Hepatitis vaccinations and other medical services for injection drug users. It is located at the

HRS offices in Oak Park. Clean syringes are distributed, used ones are collected for disposal and clients can also receive various supplies to prevent infections.

In calendar year 2008 HRS distributed 135,000 syringes, and recovered a similar amount of used ones. The amount is difficult to count exactly because they are returned in biohazard containers and the number is estimated by the weight of the container. They documented serving 1,260 SEP clients. The monthly rate of syringe distribution was averaging about 5,000 syringes per month at the beginning of the year, since October it has averaged more than 10,000 per month. At least 90% of the outreach contacts received referrals to other opportunities for recovery or treatment and/or information about eligibility.

Used syringes are collected by staff during outreach (exchange) contacts and disposed appropriately. Staff responds to calls from community members who have household-generated waste (e.g. diabetics) or who have seen syringes discarded in public places by traveling to the identified area and collecting the syringes in an appropriate manner

Safer Alternatives thru Networking and Education (SANE) is the second syringe exchange program. SANE utilizes social network representatives (designated by members of the social network) to deliver the greater part of the HIV risk reduction supplies and prevention education to local injection drug users (IDU.) Social network representatives (SNR), maintain regular, direct contact with SANE staff and systematically deliver education and supplies to other IDU that do not contact SANE directly.

In 2008, 92% of exchange contacts were conducted with Social Network Representatives. SANE established a Training & Support Program for Social Network Representatives which provides monthly education/networking meetings to improve their knowledge of risk reduction, infectious diseases transmission and treatment, syringe exchange operational procedures, local resource availability, and peer education and outreach work issues (e.g. establishing boundaries, "burnout" avoidance and management, etc.). The Training and Support Program is a peer-based, multiple contact intervention that increases the involvement and investment of local IDU in HIV/HCV prevention, testing, and care programs and contributes to positive changes in community norms regarding HIV and other high-risk behaviors. A California Office of AIDS program that is evaluating the Social Network Representative methodology provides a significant portion of the support for SANE's Training and Support Program. SANE, one of five California Syringe Exchange Programs participating in the evaluation, is considered a leader in Social Network Representative program design and operation.

Used syringes are collected by staff during outreach (exchange) contacts (usually in biohazardous waste containers provided to participants by SANE) and disposed appropriately. Staff respond to calls from community members who have household-generated waste (e.g. diabetics) or who have seen syringes discarded in

public places by traveling to the identified area and collecting the syringes in an appropriate manner (e.g. with gloves, tongs, sharps containers). SANE employees and Social Network Representatives often collect publicly-discarded syringes in their neighborhoods after receiving training in proper collection procedures.

SANE provides services 10 am to 8 pm, Monday through Saturday. Individuals contact SANE by phone or pager to arrange the time and place of contact; voice or numerical messages left outside of business hours are returned within 24 hours. Most frequently, SANE provides services in participants' homes and regular gathering places which allow staff to work with IDU on risk reduction strategies in the environment in which they actually use drugs (which increases the likelihood of sustained behavior change). Program participants also are provided with the locations and contact information of pharmacies participating in the Disease Prevention Demonstration Project ("pharmacy sales" program.)

In calendar year 2008, SANE distributed 263,727 syringes during 809 exchange episodes. This is a 73% increase in syringe volume over the volume of syringes exchanged/distributed in the previous year (determined by comparing monthly exchange rates). The average age of participants is 42 years with 8% of contacts conducted with IDU younger than 26 years. Other outcome measures for 2008 include: one third (33%) of exchanges were conducted with women, 10% were conducted with women of color, 22% were conducted with people of color ((African American 4%, Latina/o 13%, Asian 2%, Native American 3%), and 46% were conducted with individuals who reported injecting primarily methamphetamines in the previous six months. Fourteen percent of contacts occurred with individuals who reported income below the federal poverty level, 70% had a high school education or more, 17% reported they were homeless, and about 10% are commercial sex workers. Due to a combination of improved documentation, targeted outreach, and the effects of authorization, the number of contacts with members of the LGBT community (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender) increased from 9% in the first year to almost 25% in 2008. Additionally, several participants spontaneously reported their status as Iraq and/or Afghanistan combat veterans. One hundred eighteen individuals contacted the program for the first time during this period.

We would note that the City of Sacramento Police Department have had no incidents reported to them related to either the Pharmacy Sales of Syringes or the Needle Exchange programs.

Policy Considerations: The State of California Office of AIDS is tasked with the evaluation of the Disease Prevention Demonstration Program, prior to 2010, when the authorizing legislation sunsets. Syringe exchange programs are recognized in the Public Health literature as a valuable adjunct to other programs to decrease the spread of HIV, Hepatitis C and other blood borne diseases.

Environmental Considerations: None

Rationale for Recommendation: Receive and file.

Financial Considerations: In 2008 the two needle exchange programs did not result in additional costs to the city. Each program has found ways of disposing of the used sharps in cooperation with other organizations or paying the disposal fee at the City Household Hazardous Waste site. The County Public Health Officer is cooperating with City and County waste management staff to develop a long-term plan to deal with the issue of sharps disposal.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): N/A

Submitted by: 
for Glennah Trochet M.D.
County of Sacramento Public Health Officer

Approved by: 
Patti Bisharat
Director of Governmental Affairs

Recommendation Approved:

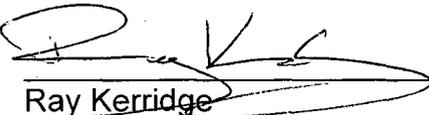

Ray Kerridge
City Manager

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