

# Reducing Harms from Injection Drug Use & Opioid Use Disorder with Syringe Services Programs

## What Is a Syringe Services Program (SSP)?

A community-based public health program that provides comprehensive harm reduction services such as

- Sterile needles, syringes, and other injection equipment
- Safe disposal containers for needles and syringes
- HIV and hepatitis testing and linkage to treatment
- Education about overdose prevention and safer injection practices
- Referral to substance use disorder treatment, including medication-assisted treatment
- Referral to medical, mental health, and social services
- Tools to prevent HIV, STDs, and viral hepatitis including counseling, condoms, and vaccinations

## How Do SSPs Benefit Communities and Public Safety?

### SSPs Increase Entry Into Substance Use Disorder Treatment:

SSPs **reduce drug use**. People who inject drugs (PWID) are 5 times as likely to enter treatment for substance use disorder and more likely to reduce or stop injecting when they use an SSP.



### SSPs Reduce Needlestick Injuries:

SSPs **reduce needlestick injuries** among first responders by providing proper disposal. One in three officers may be stuck with a needle during their career. Increasing safe disposal also protects the public from needlestick injuries. SSPs do not increase local crime in the areas where they are located.



### SSPs Reduce Overdose Deaths:

SSPs **reduce overdose deaths** by teaching PWID how to prevent and respond to drug overdose. They also learn how to use naloxone, a medication used to reverse overdose.



### 3,600 HIV Diagnoses Among PWID In 2015:

SSPs **reduce new HIV and viral hepatitis infections** by decreasing the sharing of syringes and other injection equipment. About 1 in 3 young PWID (aged 18–30) have hepatitis C.



### Prevention Saves Money:

SSPs **save health care dollars** by preventing infections. The estimated lifetime cost of treating one person living with HIV is more than \$400,000. Testing linked to hepatitis C treatment can save an estimated 320,000 lives.



**SSPs DON'T INCREASE DRUG USE OR CRIME.**

Learn more at [www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/ssps.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/ssps.html)

National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention  
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention



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