



**Campaign for a Healthier New Jersey**

# **Syringe Access and Reducing the Spread of HIV and Hepatitis C**

## **Effectiveness of Syringe Access in Reducing the Spread of HIV and Hepatitis C**

Every established medical, scientific, and legal body to study the issue concurs in the efficacy of improved access to sterile syringes to reduce the spread of infectious diseases:

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Medical Association
- American Bar Association
- American Foundation for AIDS Research
- American Nurses Association
- American Pharmaceutical Association
- American Psychiatric Association
- American Public Health Association
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Center for AIDS Prevention Studies
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Academy of Sciences
- National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
- National Association of Boards of Pharmacy
- National Black Caucus of State Legislators
- National Development and Research Institutes, Inc.
- National Institutes of Health Consensus Panel
- Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress
- President George H. W. Bush's and President William J. Clinton's AIDS Advisory Commissions

Studies have shown that allowing pharmacy sales of syringes reduces risky injection behavior by 40%, and syringe exchange programs reduce risky injection behavior by as much as 73%. A syringe exchange program in New Haven, Connecticut, was associated with a minimum 33% reduction in HIV incidence. And syringe exchange programs have been shown to reduce the spread of Hepatitis C—participants at a Tacoma, Washington, exchange were six to seven times less likely to develop hepatitis B or C.

Syringe access doesn't just protect drug users. Since Connecticut changed its paraphernalia and prescription laws in 1992 to allow for possession and sale of syringes, needle stick injuries to police decreased by 66%. In addition, studies have found that syringe access actually decreases the number of improperly discarded syringes in some neighborhoods; studies in Portland, Oregon and Baltimore, Maryland, found similar or decreased numbers of properly discarded syringes. No studies found increases in discarded syringes.

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— *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes and Human Retrovirology, 1995*

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