

Injection Drug User Health Massachusetts Perspective

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Lessons Learned

- Public health efforts for IDU take time
- Collaboration and partnerships are critical
- Community engagement and buy-in
- Monitoring and evaluation to show effect
- Cost-benefit analysis to sustain support
- Tremendous impact both population and individual level

Policy/Regulatory Background

- 1993 law allows for the creation of ten pilot Needle Exchange Programs (NEP)
- 1994 establishment of the first state-sanctioned NEP
- 2002 Commonwealth v. Landry allows possession of syringes for NEP members
- 2006 Syringe deregulation in Massachusetts (MGL 172) allows OTC sale of syringes

IDU Health Promotion Efforts

- Needle Exchange Programs
- Syringe Deregulation
- Sharps Disposal
- Overdose Prevention

Needle Exchange Programs 1994-2010

- Four (4) state-sanctioned programs
- Over six million syringes have been exchanged
- Average of 2,000 clients served per year (range: 800 – 5,000)
- New enrollments remain steady at 500 clients per year
- Total syringes exchanged ranged from 22,000 to over 700,000 per year, with a recent average of 350,000 – 400,000 per year

Syringe Deregulation

- September 2006, MGL 172 deregulated the sale of syringes and decriminalized possession
- Individuals may purchase sterile syringes over-the-counter
- There has been a parallel decrease in the amount of syringes exchanged in NEPs since deregulation

Syringe Disposal

- Since 2007 MDPH Office of HIV/AIDS has placed 40 sharps disposal kiosks across the state
- From 2007–2010 over 1.2 million used sharps were collected
- OHA placed kiosks in HIV prevention programs, drop-in centers, community health centers, hospitals, substance use treatment programs, and pharmacies
- Collaboration with Bureau of Environmental Health

Overdose Prevention

- Seven pilot programs began in 2008
- Joint project with Bureau of Substance Abuse Services
- Enrolls users and non-users
- 8,913 enrollees (as of 4/11)
 - 6,066 users
 - 2,811 non-users (parents, partners, friends)
- Over 900 overdoses reversed (as of 2/11)

Thank You

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