

Over-the-Counter Pharmacy Syringe Sales Program

Background

Each year, bloodborne diseases such as HIV and hepatitis cause a significant number of deaths and result in millions of dollars in preventable medical costs. In Los Angeles County alone more than 68,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS, and another 135,000 people are infected with hepatitis C.

Research shows that access to clean, sterile syringes can prevent the spread of these diseases by reducing the sharing of injection equipment. The Disease Prevention Demonstration Project authorizes registered pharmacies to sell up to 10 hypodermic needles without a prescription to a person 18 years or older.

Syringes that are acquired through the Project and have been properly stored for disposal are not considered drug paraphernalia and may not be used as evidence of possession of paraphernalia.

Proper Disposal of Needles

- Place used syringes in a sharps container or a rigid puncture-resistant container that has secure lids or caps (such as a heavy plastic detergent or bleach bottle) and label it “**sharps**.”
- Store the sharps container in a safe location, away from children and pets.
- When the container is full, seal it, and make sure the word “**sharps**” is still clearly visible.
- Contact the Household Hazardous Waste Hotline (1-800-988-6942) or Coalition for Safe Needle Disposal (1-800-643-1643) to locate a nearby collection site for disposal.
- Needles and syringes must be disposed of properly. It is against the law to dispose of hypodermic needles on a playground, beach, or park, or at any public or private school. Leaving needles in these places is punishable by a fine (\$200-\$2,000), imprisonment (up to six months), or both.



Accessing Services

HIV and Hepatitis Testing

You may become infected with HIV and hepatitis B and C by sharing used needles and other injection equipment. It is important to know your HIV status so that you can protect your health and the health of others.

For information on where you can get tested for HIV, contact the

California AIDS Hotline
1-800-367-AIDS (2437)

For information on where you can get tested for Hepatitis B and C, contact the

American Liver Foundation
Los Angeles Chapter
(310) 670-4624

Drug Treatment Services

A variety of drug treatment services are available in Los Angeles County. To locate a drug treatment program, call the

LA County Info Line
2-1-1 or 1-800-339-6993

For more information on the Disease Prevention Demonstration Project or to obtain the names and addresses of participating pharmacies, contact

Disease Prevention Demonstration Program

313. N. Figueroa St., Room 806
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 240-8196

www.publichealth.org/php/dpdp



8/2011