Syringe Exchange Programs in Ohio

[Columbus, Ohio] As Ohio continues to struggle with the impact of widespread opiate addiction, the need for recovery services continues to outpace supply. As the scope of the problem keeps growing, syringe exchange programs (SEPs) have emerged as an appropriate public health strategy to reduce communicable infections associated with injecting drugs and sharing needles. SEPs provide new syringes in exchange for ones that have been used by people who inject drugs (PWID) in order to reduce the transmission of bloodborne pathogens, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), and hepatitis C virus (HCV). SEPs encourage the use of a new, clean needle with each injection. SEPs also provide a connection for clients to other services including, but not limited to, substance abuse treatment, HIV and HCV testing, naloxone kits and training, food assistance, and physical and mental health treatment.

This report is a resource for local health districts and other entities in Ohio reviewing whether the communities they serve would benefit from a syringe exchange program. The five SEPs currently operating in Ohio—some of which serve multiple counties—provided feedback on basic program information; ways to engage the community in the development of SEPs; developing connections with law enforcement, health and social service providers, and clients themselves; and overall opportunities and challenges of operating a SEP.

Click here to download the full report.

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