

THE CONNECTICUT SYRINGE EXCHANGE SUMMARY
STATE FISCAL YEAR
JULY 1, 2008– JUNE 30, 2009

This report summarizes the services delivered by Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPs) in Connecticut during the state fiscal year 2008-2009. The five programs established and monitored by the Department of Public Health AIDS and Chronic Diseases Section are located in Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, New Haven and Stamford. The agencies that were contracted to administer these programs during 2008-2009 were the AIDS Project Greater Danbury, AIDS Project Hartford, Bridgeport Health Department, New Haven Health Department and Stamford Health Department. As of June 30, 2009, there were 1,287 unduplicated clients enrolled in the five programs. This represents a 34% decrease compared to 1722 in June 30, 2008. The total number of syringes distributed as of June 30, 2009 was 191,860. This represents a 4% increase compared to 184,132 in June 30, 2008. The total number of syringes collected as of June 30, 2009 was 197,038. This represents a 3% increase compared to 190,942 in June 30, 2008. The number of client visits as of June 30, 2009 was 5,419. This represents a 10% decrease compared to 5,985 in FY 07- 08. There was also an increase in the total number of referrals made by the SEPs to other services, such as substance abuse treatment, medical care and STD clinics from 4,806 as of June 30,2008 to 9,871 as of June 30,2009 (1.05% increase). There was a large increase in the number of client referrals to alcohol treatment, the STD clinic and HIV education/outreach.

All of the syringe exchange programs are integrated into HIV/AIDS prevention and street outreach activities that exist within their host agencies. This offers clients the opportunity to receive information regarding how to prevent HIV as well as services such as HIV counseling and testing. HIV counseling and testing is offered on the van at all five programs. Free condoms are distributed.

Upon enrollment to the syringe exchange programs, an intake is done to determine the nature and frequency of each client's substance and syringe use. This intake also helps to determine what additional services clients may benefit from. In addition, periodic assessments are conducted with returning clients in order to update the status of their circumstances. Connecticut legislation allows for new clients to be provided with an early intervention packet of 30 syringes. Returning clients must then exchange one dirty needle for each clean needle received.

HIV positive clients identified by the program may also be linked to Ryan White Case management programs. The syringe exchange programs have formal relationships with health care facilities enabling clients to receive evaluation and treatment of medical concerns.

As of June 30, 2009, 1063 syringe exchange clients were referred to substance abuse treatment programs. This represents a 199% increase from last year (355 clients). This significant increase is attributed to a large number of clients that were referred from New Haven Health and Stamford Health Departments to alcohol treatment facilities. These referrals are based on the client's readiness to participate in drug treatment.

The Department of Public Health AIDS and Chronic Diseases Division convenes quarterly meetings of the Syringe Exchange Program staff to discuss programmatic issues, client trends, interventions and to provide support and networking opportunities for the program staff. This year the syringe exchange programs met with Attorney Adam Wolf, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The purpose of this meeting was to learn about syringe exchange laws as they

apply to Connecticut. Attorney Wolf has been involved with these issues for several years and was particularly involved in the City of Bridgeport case in 2001.

Some of the syringe exchange programs experienced problems such as client arrests, due to the police “cleaning up” target areas. Some sites also experienced mechanical problems with their vans. Bridgeport and New Haven Health Departments are in dire need of new vans. Both sites applied for funding to purchase new or used vans, but were unsuccessful in receiving grant awards. However, the City of Stamford purchased a new van for their SEP, which includes a separate space for HIV counseling and testing. One program, AIDS Project Hartford, was able to continue providing evening hours two nights a week (Thursdays and Fridays) from 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., which resulted in an increase in enrollment and participation of clients. AIDS Project Hartford is a community-based organization and therefore, is not restricted by local government and union policies.

Program Utilization

From July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

Syringes Distributed	191,860
Syringes Collected	197,038

Gender and Race Ethnicity Break Down

From July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

	Male	Female	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
New clients	559	154	97	273	340	3	713

As of June 30, 2009

	Male	Female	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
Unduplicated Clients Enrolled	1006	281	169	589	520	9	1287

Referrals to services from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

Substance Abuse Treatment	1063
Medical/Health Services	551
HIV Counseling and Testing	771
HIV Health Education/Risk Reduction Services	5,390
HIV Case Management Services	45
Others (TB, STD's, family planning, etc.)	1,454
Total	9,274

