Preventing HIV/HCV & Fatal Opiate Overdose among Injection Drug Users

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Topics for Today

- Overview of Harm Reduction
- Sterile Syringe Access
- Fatal Opiate Overdose

Working Definition of Harm Reduction

Harm Reduction:
A set of practical, public health strategies designed to reduce the negative consequences of drug use and promote healthy individuals and communities.
Key Principles of Harm Reduction

• **Designs & promotes** public health interventions that minimize the harmful effects of drug use.

• **Understands** drug use as a complex, multifaceted issue that encompasses behaviors from severe abuse to total abstinence.

• **Meets** people where they are in the course of their drug use.

Key Principles (continued)

• **Ensures** that people who use drugs have a real voice in the creation of programs.

• **Affirms** people who use drugs are the primary agents of change.

• **Empowers** communities to share information and support each other.

Harm Reduction Practice Calls For

• Non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services

• Low-threshold program models

• Resources to people who use drugs
Goals of Harm Reduction

- **Prevent disease**
  Sterile syringe access to prevent HIV and hepatitis

- **Reduce mortality**
  Overdose prevention with training and naloxone distribution; link to medical care and social services

- **Treatment for drug dependence**
  Buprenorphine, Suboxone, Vivitrol or Methadone Maintenance

- **Empower communities and reduce stigma**
  Community organizing and engagement

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**Sterile Syringe Access:**

**History and Timeline**

- First started in Holland in response to hepatitis B outbreak in the 1980s
- First legal program in United States started in Tacoma, Washington in 1988
- First Wisconsin program began in 1994
- Rooted in activism and advocacy

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**Harm Reduction Resource**

www.harmreductioncoalition.org
Efficacy and Outcomes

- Syringe access programs are the most effective, evidence-based HIV/HCV prevention tool for people who use drugs.

- Seven federally funded research studies found that syringe exchange programs are a valuable resource.

- In cities across the nation, people who inject drugs have reversed the course of the AIDS epidemic by using sterile syringes and harm reduction practices.

Key points in research: syringe exchange does not…

- Syringe exchange does not encourage drug use.

- Syringe exchange does not increase crime rates.

- Syringe exchange does not increase needle-stick injuries in the community.

Syringe Exchange Does….

- Syringe exchange reduces HIV infection.

- Syringe exchange reduces risk for hepatitis C infection.

- Syringe exchange programs link participants to drug treatment, medical care, housing, and other social services.
Injection Drug Use: national scope

- Injection drug use occurs in every socioeconomic and racial/ethnic group and in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- The majority of injection drug users are men, but the number of women who inject is on the rise.

The NEED for Syringe Access & Harm Reduction

- Over 8,000 people are newly infected with HIV every year due to syringe sharing.
- In 2015, in Wisconsin, 226 people were newly infected with HIV, 6 due to syringe sharing.
- Over 15,000 people are newly infected with hepatitis C every year due to syringe and equipment sharing.

Sterile Syringe Access Programs

- Nearly 200 syringe exchange programs currently operate in 38 states, Puerto Rico, Washington DC.
- Wisconsin has three syringe exchange providers (ARCW, 16th Street Community Health Clinic, Madison Health Department)
- Access includes: syringe exchange programs, over-the-counter pharmacy sales, syringe prescriptions, and secondary exchange (distribution informally through peer networks)
- Endorsed by American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, US Conference of Mayors, among many other legal, medical, and policy institutions
Syringe exchange program models

- Storefront
- Street-based (fixed sites; roving sites through mobile vans and/or walking teams)
- Peer and secondary exchange through networks
- Underground, unauthorized programs (operating under the radar)

Opportunities and Challenges: the good news and bad news

GOOD:
Syringe exchange services are available in Appleton, Beloit, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Janesville, Kenosha, La Crosse, Madison, Milwaukee, Racine, Superior, Waukesha & Wausau.

BAD:
Staffing levels have remained the same. Many programs are poorly/under funded.

ARCW’s LifePoint

- Fixed site, mobile, delivery
- No enrollment
- No limits on supply’s
- HIV/HCV testing offered to all
- Monday - Saturday
ARCW’s LifePoint 2015
- Exchanged 4,044,536 syringes
- 625 drug treatment referrals
- 2,352 HIV tests (24 positives)
- 1,383 HCV tests (262 positives)
- 453,962 condoms distributed

Materials
- Syringes/needles
- Cookers/cotton
- Alcohol wipes
- Antibiotic ointment
- Tourniquets
- Condoms

Syringes/Needles
Alcohol Pads and Triple Antibiotic Ointment

Pipe Holders

Preventing Fatal Opiate Overdose

- 85% of all overdoses are witnessed
- Active drug users will respond
- Naloxone (Narcan) reverses an overdose
How Do We Respond to an Overdose?

- Stimulate - can they be awakened
- Call 911
- Airway
- Rescue Breathing
- Evaluate
- Muscular Injection
- Evaluate & Support

Naloxone Kit

ARCW's Impact 2015

- 2,897 People Trained
- 1,135 Peer Rescues Reported
- 235 Facilitated Referrals to Treatment
Still A Long Way To Go

- Expand Training
- 911 Good Samaritan Law
- Naloxone Shortage/Price Gouging

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