

THE CONNECTICUT SYRINGE EXCHANGE SUMMARY
STATE FISCAL YEAR
JULY 1, 2009– JUNE 30, 2010

During the state fiscal year 2009-2010, the Department of Public Health (DPH) continued contracts with five agencies to operate Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPs). The agencies and towns served are AIDS Project/Hartford (Hartford, New Britain), AIDS Project Greater Danbury (Danbury), Bridgeport Health Department (Bridgeport), New Haven Health Department (New Haven), and the Stamford Health Department (Stamford). Due to state budget rescissions that affected syringe exchange funding, the Stamford Health Department program was discontinued in January 2010. The decision was based on very low utilization of the Stamford program compared to others. Because of the low program utilization, the Stamford Health Department is able to incorporate the service with remaining HIV prevention staff and has stated it will continue to exchange syringes provided by DPH for the clients that request them.

During this program year, 1,681 unduplicated clients were enrolled in Connecticut's SEPs representing a 24% increase compared to 1,287 in June 30, 2009. The total number of syringes distributed (175,786) and collected (181,536) decreased by 8% compared to the year ending June 30, 2009. Some of the decrease is attributed to the discontinuation of the Stamford SEP in January and mechanical problems with some of the mobile health vans that provide SEP services. At the same time, the number of client visits as of June 30, 2010 was 5,849 representing a 7% increase compared to FY 08-09. The total number of referrals made to services such as STD clinics, drug treatment facilities, and mental health during this year was 4,448.

All of the syringe exchange programs are integrated into HIV/AIDS prevention and street outreach activities that exist within their host agencies. This provides clients the opportunity to receive HIV prevention information and services including HIV counseling and testing which is offered on the mobile health vans of all programs.

During the SEP intake process, program staff assesses the nature and frequency of each client's substance and syringe use, and identify additional services clients may be referred to. Subsequent periodic assessments with returning clients are conducted to update the status of their circumstances, and to identify referrals that may be appropriate including drug treatment.

During the 2009-2010 program year, 384 syringe exchange clients were ready to enter drug treatment and referred to substance abuse treatment programs. There were 76 additional referrals to the Drug Treatment Advocacy programs, a DPH-funded HIV prevention program that also assists substance-abusing clients at risk for contracting or transmitting HIV to get into a treatment program of their choice.

HIV positive clients identified by the SEPs are linked to Ryan White Case management programs to assure they are connected to medical care and other support services. The syringe exchange programs also have formal relationships with local health care facilities enabling clients to receive evaluation and treatment of other medical concerns.

The Department of Public Health AIDS and Chronic Diseases Section convenes quarterly meetings of the Syringe Exchange Program contractors to discuss programmatic issues, client trends, interventions and to provide support and networking opportunities for the program staff. Most of the programs experienced mechanical problems with their vans. AIDS Project Greater Danbury, AIDS Project Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven Health Department are in dire need of new vans to continue to provide this mobile health service.

AIDS Project Hartford (APH) increased program enrollment and participation in Hartford by providing SEP services on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. AIDS Project Hartford also worked with local health, law enforcement, and other organizations in New Britain and expanded its services to that town on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The HIV counselor from Human Resources Agency in New Britain goes to APH's van on Tuesdays and Thursdays to offer HIV counseling and testing services to the SEP clients. The counselor also recruits clients for the Safety Counts Program, which is an HIV prevention intervention for clients who are currently using drugs and who are not in treatment.

The major goal of syringe exchange programs is to reduce the number of HIV/AIDS cases in Connecticut. HIV/AIDS surveillance data shows that during 2002-2009 the most significant change in new HIV/AIDS cases has been the decrease in the number of cases with injection drug use risk. Although injection drug use remains an important risk for contracting HIV, the number of cases reported in Connecticut with this risk has decreased from approximately 400 in 2002 to 100 in 2008 and 2009.

**Connecticut Syringe Exchange Program Data
July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010**

Syringes Distributed	175,786
Syringes Collected	181,536

**Client Gender and Race Ethnicity
From July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010**

	Male	Female	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
New clients	550	190	114	283	341	2	740

	Male	Female	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
Unduplicated Clients Enrolled	1283	398	226	845	610	0	1681

Referrals to services from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010

Substance Abuse Treatment	384
Medical/Health Services	327
HIV Counseling and Testing	353
HIV Health Education/Risk Reduction Services	378
HIV Case Management Services	16
Others (TB, STD's, family planning, mental health, etc.)	1188
Total	2,646