

# ✓ What are SSPs?

**Syringe services programs**, also known as SSPs, are community-based programs that provide comprehensive harm reduction services.



## SSPs provide a variety of services.



Access to free sterile needles and syringes



Safe disposal of needles and syringes



HIV and hepatitis testing and linkage to treatment



Hepatitis A and B vaccination



Overdose treatment and education

## SSPs also provide:

- ✓ Referral to mental health services.
- ✓ Referral to substance use disorder treatment.
- ✓ Other tools to prevent HIV and hepatitis, including counseling, condoms, and PrEP (a medicine to prevent HIV).

## SSPs are an effective public health strategy.

1

**SSPs reduce needlestick injuries among first responders and the public.**



- ✓ SSPs provide safe disposal sites for the collection of used syringes.
- ✓ SSPs reduce the number of improperly discarded syringes.
- ✓ SSPs reduce the danger of needlestick injuries to public safety workers and the public.



A study of Connecticut police officers found that needlestick injuries were reduced by **two-thirds** after implementing SSPs.<sup>1</sup>

After the implementation of a SSP in Portland, Oregon, research demonstrated a nearly

**66% decrease**



in the number of improperly discarded syringes.<sup>2</sup>

2

**SSPs reduce new HIV and viral hepatitis infections and save health care dollars.**



- ✓ SSPs serve as an entry to other health services, including HIV and viral hepatitis testing, and hepatitis A and B vaccination.
- ✓ SSPs decrease the sharing of syringes and injection equipment by providing clients sterile syringes to inject drugs.
- ✓ SSPs provide education about safer injection practices.
- ✓ SSPs link clients into care and treatment.

New HIV infections have declined by

**80 percent**

among persons who inject drugs since the implementation of SSPs in the late 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

Estimated lifetime cost of treating one person living with HIV

**> \$400,000**<sup>4</sup>



Testing linked to HCV treatment can save an estimated **320,000 lives.**<sup>4</sup>

3

**SSPs increase entry into substance use disorder treatment and reduce overdoses.**



- ✓ SSPs can provide clients with referrals to treatment or local recovery programs.
- ✓ SSPs educate clients how to prevent and respond to drug overdoses.
- ✓ SSPs teach clients how to use naloxone, a medication used to reverse overdoses.



**SSP clients are 5 times**

more likely to enter a drug treatment program than non-clients.<sup>5</sup>

**SSPs do not increase drug use or crime.**<sup>4</sup>

Sources:

1. [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7648290](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7648290)
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