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. SSPPs reduce needlestick injuries among first responders and the public.
   - SSPPs provide safe disposal sites for the collection of used syringes.
   - SSPPs reduce the number of improperly discarded syringes.
   - SSPPs 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 SSPPs.

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

   After the implementation of a SSP in Portland, Oregon, research demonstrated a nearly 66% decrease in the number of improperly discarded syringes.

3. SSPPs increase entry into substance use disorder treatment and reduce overdoses.
   - SSPPs can provide clients with referrals to treatment or local recovery programs.
   - SSPPs educate clients how to prevent and respond to drug overdoses.
   - SSPPs 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.

SSPs do not increase drug use or crime.

Sources:
1. www.mchc.mn.gov/pubs/40450860
2. www.mchc.mn.gov/pubs/904086
3. www.mchc.mn.gov/pubs/404606
5. www.mchc.mn.gov/pubs/304706

Published: July 2018