

# New Jersey Harm Reduction Program (Syringe Access Program)

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# History

- On December 19, 2006, the “Bloodborne Disease Harm Reduction Act” (P.L. 2006, c. 99) was signed into law, allowing for the establishment of up to six demonstration Syringe Access Programs (SAPs) in New Jersey.
- The Division of HIV, STD and TB Services (DHSTS), located within the Public Health Services Branch of the Department of Health (DOH), was charged with implementing the provisions of the law, including identifying those municipalities most in need and capable of implementing a program.
- Municipalities were thus chosen through a competitive grant process, wherein interested applicants had to demonstrate that within their municipalities there was a large number of persons living with HIV/AIDS (> 350), a high prevalence of HIV attributable to Injection Drug Use (IDU) (300/100,000), and the existence of an ordinance permitting the establishment of such a program.

# History

- Five municipalities were subsequently authorized by DHSTS to operate SAPs:
- *Atlantic City (November 27, 2007),*
- *Camden (January 5, 2008),*
- *Jersey City (July 6, 2009),*
- *Newark (February 19, 2008) and*
- *Paterson (January 30, 2008).*
- In 2017, SAP expanded to Asbury Park (August 16, 2017)
- In 2018, SAP expanded to Trenton (January 1, 2018)

# Program Overview



SAPs are safe, non-stigmatizing spaces for people who inject drugs (PWID) to get new syringes and injection supplies, and to dispose of used syringes.



The CDC and WHO recommend SAPs as a vital tool to prevent HIV, Hepatitis C, and skin/tissue infections among PWID.



SAP staff offer person-centered, trauma-informed “harm reduction sessions” to support PWID.



This helps participants reduce the risks associated with injection drug use and increase their connection to community housing, social, and mental health resources.



Each SAP site is co-located with an Access to Reproductive Care and HIV (ARCH) Nurse who provides:

- HIV and viral hepatitis testing and counseling with linkage to treatment
- Condoms
- Referral and linkage to medical care, mental health and social services, including drug treatment
- Overdose prevention education and access to Naloxone and fentanyl test strips
- Education on safe disposal of injection equipment
- Safe injection education and wound care

# Harm Reduction Centers New Jersey

- Camden Area Health Education Center, Camden
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation, Jersey City\*
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation, Paterson
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation, Trenton
- North Jersey Community Research Initiative, Newark\*
- South Jersey AIDS Alliance, Atlantic City\*
- Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey, Asbury Park

*\*SAP sites with Drop-In Centers*

**Drop-In Centers provide access to food, telephone services, computer services, restrooms, showers and laundry services**



# Next Steps



Revise the SAP law (“Bloodborne Disease Harm Reduction Act” (P.L. 2006, c. 99) to remove/modify statutory mandate on ordinance requirement



Expand SAPs into Harm Reduction Centers to broaden the range of services provided to people who use drugs, and to reduce stigma around injection drug use



Strengthen partnerships with local stakeholders, legislators, community members, and service providers to increase advocacy, education, awareness, funding and support for harm reduction



Increase access to treatment: In partnership with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, successfully piloted low-threshold buprenorphine induction at two of the seven SAP sites (Asbury Park and Atlantic City) in 2019, which has led to an expansion to the remaining five HRC sites starting in August, 2021

# Harm Reduction Tour



DOH presentations throughout state on public health benefits of syringe access expansion & harm reduction as an effective overdose prevention strategy.

Engage & collaborate with stakeholders, including:



- Public health officials
- County leadership
- Parent groups
- Media
- Law enforcement
- Public opinion influencers
- Faith leaders
- LGBTQ, HIV, and health equity advocates
- Core agencies (mental health, treatment, housing)

**THANK YOU**