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State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

December 2, 2013

TO: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT: SYRINGE EXCHANGE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The California Department of Public Health, Center for Infectious Diseases, Office of AIDS (OA) is pleased to announce the launch of its Syringe Exchange Certification Program. Beginning today, December 2, 2013, OA is accepting applications for the program.

The California State Legislature declared that scientific data from syringe exchange programs (SEPs) have demonstrated that SEPs do not lead to increased drug use in the population and have multiple benefits: they can curtail the spread of HIV among injection drug users (IDUs) while serving as an important bridge to treatment and recovery from substance use disorders.

On October 9, 2011, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., signed into law [Assembly Bill 604 \(Skinner, Chapter 744, Statutes of 2011\)](#). The law allowed OA to establish a process through which qualified California agencies could apply directly to OA to provide syringe exchange services in locales where conditions exist for the rapid spread of HIV, viral hepatitis, or other blood-borne diseases.

In his [signing message](#), Governor Brown directed OA to develop regulations to clarify the application process and criteria. He also asserted his belief that the process will “reduce the spread of communicable diseases and the suffering they cause and, at the same time, respect public safety and local preference.” Regulations establishing the program requirements were approved by the California Office of Administrative Law and went into effect on September 1, 2013.

Organizations that wish to add syringe exchange services to their current services for IDUs and that meet the minimum requirements outlined in [California Health and Safety Code Section 121349](#) may either apply for authorization through their local city council or board of supervisors or apply for state certification through OA. SEPs already

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authorized by local (city or county) governments do not need to apply for state certification.

The Syringe Exchange Certification Program web page will be published and the online application accessible to the public beginning December 2, 2013. The program page will be located at: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/aids/Pages/OASyringeAccess.aspx>.

If an application is deemed provisionally appropriate by OA, a 90-day public comment period is required prior to state certification. The public may comment online about an application during the 90-day public comment period at: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/aids/Pages/SyringeExchangeCertificationProgram.aspx>.

Individuals who wish to comment on a locally-authorized SEP may do so by contacting their local board of supervisors or city council.

If you have any questions, please call or e-mail Alessandra Ross, Injection Drug Use Specialist and Interim Chief, HIV Prevention Branch at (916) 449-5796 or alessandra.ross@cdph.ca.gov or Maria Sevilla, Health Program Specialist, HIV Prevention Branch at (916) 449-5790 or maria.sevilla@cdph.ca.gov.



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