

2021 PAMED HOD Resolutions

PREAMBLE

Subject: Syringe Services Programs in Pennsylvania

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Endorsed by: Erie County Medical Society

WHEREAS

Whereas, every day, 10 Pennsylvanians are lost to substance use disorder.

Whereas, Pennsylvania has the 3rd highest rate of drug overdose deaths in the country and the 9th highest rate of new human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections.

Whereas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has noted that Pennsylvania is one of the states at risk for increases in HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) infections with injection-drug use having a significant role in this disease transmission.

Whereas, syringe services programs (SSPs) provide free sterile syringes and collect used syringes from injection-drug users (IDUs) to reduce the transmission of blood borne pathogens, including HIV, hepatitis B virus, and HCV as well as to prevent skin infections and endocarditis.

Whereas, SSPs provide a bridge to comprehensive prevention services and referrals to IDUs that can help reduce the spread of these infections and can increase access to health care and substance abuse treatment for this population.

Whereas, these services increase the chance of someone's entering treatment to overcome substance use disorder.

Whereas, these programs decrease syringe litter and needle stick exposures in the community.

Whereas, there has been no increase in the crime rate in the communities that offer these services and SSPs have not been shown to increase the frequency of injection-drug use.

Whereas, these programs have over 30 years of overwhelming medical evidence as to their success and have been shown to be cost-effective.

Whereas, SSPs are a critical public health intervention for all of Pennsylvania's communities that are struggling with the substance use disorder epidemic.

Whereas, the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 includes language that gives states and local communities the opportunity to use federal funds provided through the Department of Health and Human Services to support certain components of SSPs.

Whereas, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 is legislation that allocates \$30 million for harm

reduction services which includes SSPs.

Whereas, Pennsylvania needs to take advantage of these funds to combat this epidemic in our communities.

Whereas, Pennsylvania state law defines syringes as drug paraphernalia and this legislative barrier prevents the widespread operation of syringe service programs throughout the Commonwealth.

Whereas, it is essential that these barriers be removed to allow this effective public health service to be available to all those in need in Pennsylvania.

Whereas, stigma exists around these services despite the overwhelming evidence that they help protect our communities.

Resolved

RESOLVED, the Pennsylvania Medical Society will actively support advocacy for syringe services programs across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

RESOLVED, that PAMED shall support the legalization and public funding of syringe services programs and harm reduction programs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, provided that funding for these programs does not detract from funding to cover treatment of substance use disorder.

CONCLUSION

Fiscal Note:

The financial impact of this resolution is estimated as having no cost.

Reference Materials



2003 BMC Public Health - Stancliff - Syringe ...



2010 MMWR - Syringe exchange programs in...



2015 JAMA - Rich - IDEological anachronism ...



2015-7-30 NEJM - Strathdee - Threading the ...



2016 AMA - Syringe and Needle Exchange Pr...



2016 AMA JOE - Weinmeyer - Needle exchan...



2017 JAMA - Abbasi - CDC says more needle ...



2019 JID - Schwetz - Opioids and infectious ...



2019-5-23 NEJM - Kishore - Lessons form Sc...



2020 Gov Wolf - Public Health Deans - Gov.W...



2020-2021 PAMED Policy Compendium.pdf



2020-8-13 NEJM - Dore - People with hepatiti...



2021-4-12 PA - House cosponsorship memor...



2021-4-12 PA - Senate cosponsorship memor...



2021-5-12 HIV.gov - Syringe Services Progra...



2021-5-12 PA.gov - Treating Heroin and Opioi...



2021-5-12 Vital Strategies - Overdose Preven...



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- Pennsylvania medical society policy compendium 2020-2021. Drug Abuse. 95.989. Support for safe consumption facilities. Page 18. "PAMED is directed to endorse the opening of an independently funded and studied pilot trial of a comprehensive illicit drug user engagement site including a safer injection facility in keeping with existing multinational evidence-based medicine. (Res. 202, H-2019)".
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