

Syringe Service Programs: A Solution to Promoting Good Health & Well Being

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INTRODUCTION

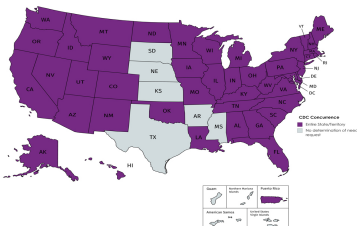
The 17 sustainable development goals are designed to achieve a more sustainable future for all. SDG-3 addresses good health and well being

A society and more specifically a community is stronger overall by the promotion of good health and well being

Syringe service programs (SSP) also known as syringe exchange programs (SEP) promote this goal while also assisting one of the most vulnerable populations with programs by promoting living a healthy lifestyle

SIGNIFICANCE

- Injecting drug users (IDUs) are at a high risk for contracting and spreading viral hepatitis through nonsterile injection practices, unprotected sexual contact and unsanitary living conditions
- Without access to safe syringe service programs and disposal locations, people who inject drugs have fewer options of proper disposal, which may lead to disposal in public places (Levine et al., 2019)
- Survey's from 23 SPP's showed the prevalence of homelessness ranged from 25%- 74% and SPP's often devote many resources to addressing the needs of this population (Des Jarlais et al., 2015-2018)
- The illustration below shows states at risk of significant increases in hepatitis infection or HIV outbreak due to IDU



POSITION STATEMENT

The third sustainable development goal of "good health and well being" proposes a healthy lifestyle and promotion of well being for all ages, syringe service programs are one of the answers to promoting this solution by the year 2030

SUPPORT FOR POSITION

Promotion of good health and well being leads to:

- Reduced rates of communicable disease including mental health and addresses antimicrobial resistance and determinants of health such as sanitation (United Nations, 2019)
- Implementing activity-based events, which encourages physical activity and can be useful in improving physical, mental and social well being (Vuong et al., 2020)

SSP's are a solution to promoting good health and well being because:

- Studies show "IDU's can be encouraged to participate in preventative health promotion efforts through SEP's." (Bowman et al., 2014)
- Provides specific attention to encourage younger participants to obtain and complete HBV vaccinations (Bowman et al., 2014)
- They help people to stop using drugs, IDU's who have used SPP's are three times as likely to report a reduced injection frequency than those who have never used a SPP (CDC, 2019)
- SPP's protect communities and first responders with less needles in public places (CDC, 2019)
- Reduce health care costs by preventing communicable diseases and infections. "The estimated lifetime cost of treating an HIV positive patient is more than \$45,000" (CDC, 2019)

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Syringe service programs not only prevent the spread of disease such as HIV and HCV, they also reduce the number of individuals seeking medical attention

- Vaccination, testing, linkage to infectious disease, substance use treatment, access to and disposal of syringes and injection equipment are some of the many services offered to prevent these potential patients and screenings from occurring in acute care settings. These programs reserve hospital beds for patients who need greater medical attention. This also supports the staff ratio by decreasing the number of IDU patients seeking care

Advantages of SSP's in relation to working in an acute care settings:

- Provides education and counseling to reduce sexual, injection and overdose risks
- Provision of HIV, viral hepatitis, STD and tuberculosis screening
- Referrals to medical care, mental health services and other support services

As a registered nurse, engagement in global health practices and continuing research into the sustainable development goals should be apart of everyday practice



CONCLUSION

Syringe service programs offer vital benefits for active participants. Having funds to run these programs is very important to the overall health and well being of society

SSP's can slow the spread of disease in the IDU population. Under the guidelines of the United Nations goals of sustainable development, by the year 2030, the disease rate will continue to decrease or be eliminated

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