ECHO Idaho: Opioid Addiction and Treatment

Harm Reduction: Idaho’s Needle Exchange Law
February 27, 2020
Ian Troesoyer, DNP, FNP
Board Member, Idaho Harm Reduction Project

The speaker has no relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose.
Learning Objectives

• At the end of this presentation, it’s my hope that participants will...
  – understand the rationale for providing syringe access services
  – understand the impact Idaho’s 2019 *Syringe and Needle Exchange Act* has on providing syringe services in Idaho
  – be better prepared to navigate the political complexities that exist concerning syringe exchange in Idaho.
Injection drug use is a problem in Idaho... and it’s fueling the spread of blood borne pathogens.
• Heroin use in Idaho equals the national average, but Idaho has the fifth highest rate of pain reliever misuse in the country (CBHSQ, 2017).
• Arrests for drug-related crimes in Idaho increased from 12,496 in 2008 to 26,936 in 2018 (IDHW, 2020).
• 82.4% of the 244 heroin users and 51.9% of the 1,203 meth users admitted to publicly funded substance abuse treatment programs in Idaho reported injection drug use (IDHW, 2020).
• 22.4% of people detected as HIV positive in ID between 2008 and 2017 reported injecting drugs previously (IDHW 2020).
• Injection drug use is the most common cause of HCV transmission in the US
  – About 1/3 of 18-30 year old injection drug users are estimated to be infected
  – Up to 90% of older or former injection drug users (those who injected drugs in the 1970s or 1980s) are estimated to be infected (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016)
Emerging Population?

TRENDS IN AGE-SPECIFIC INCIDENCE RATE OF CHRONIC HEPATITIS C, IDAHO 2012-2016

145% Rate Increase 10-29 Year-olds

Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare: Pedersen, 2018
2012 to 2016 Percent Increase in Age-Adjusted Detection Rate of Chronic Hepatitis C Among 10-29 Year-Olds, Idaho

Ada County: 265% Increase  
Bannock County: 1274% Increase

Source: Idaho Department of Health and Welfare: Pedersen, 2018
• A systematic review of syringe exchange programs demonstrated that they are associated with decreases in HIV and HCV prevalence:
  – up to 40% reductions in HIV/HCV co-infection
  – up to 43% reductions HIV prevalence
  – up to 30% reductions in HCV prevalence (Abdul-Quader et al., 2013).
What can syringe access look like?

ECHO IDAHO
• 43% of syringe exchanges experience at least monthly conflict with law enforcement regardless of their legal status
  – low-visibility syringe dispensaries seem to be the least likely to have clients stopped by law enforcement (Beletsky, Grau, White, Bowman, & Heimer, 2011).
• “I think probably the only major thing I would change at the statute level is protections for people who are both conducting syringe exchanges as well as participants, as far as legal protections, because currently our drug paraphernalia law and our syringe exchange law are in conflict. Technically, even a provider conducting syringe exchange could be arrested for paraphernalia if they have used, collected syringes on them and they are stopped by the police... and we fear that it could potentially cause problems later on.” (H. Bush, personal communication, February 28, 2019).
What passed in Idaho?

- Rep. Blanksma gets a call from Republic Services
- Intent:
- Bill itself:
- Legislation history:
What happened next?

- 2019 Legislature went home without authorizing administrative rules, setting all current rules to expire on July 1, 2019.
- IDHW received guidance from Governor Little’s office that these rules were not mission critical and that non-binding ‘guidance’ should be created in place of regulation.
Key Points

• The spread of HIV and HCV by injection drug use is a problem in Idaho.

• Syringe exchange services are an evidence-based intervention for reducing the spread of HIV and HCV.

• Syringe exchange is politically controversial.

• Idaho has a new Syringe Exchange Act that has an interesting political history.
References


ECHO Idaho: Opioid Addiction and Treatment

Join us for our next session

For information, please visit uidaho.edu/echo