SYRINGE/NEEDLE DISPOSAL OPTIONS

Learn more about safe disposal options for needles and syringes by visiting the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s website:


- Some hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies, may dispose of used needles and/or sell sharps disposal containers.
- Mail-back programs can be found on the web.
- Some city departments and waste haulers have specific requirements for needle disposal. Check with them for your area’s procedures.
- Some county hazardous waste sites take sharps containers. Call your nearest facility for their requirements.

SYRINGE ACCESS INITIATIVE EVALUATION

An evaluation was completed to assess the public health impact of Minnesota Statute § 151.40. It was found that the law increased syringe access and decreased disease risk behaviors such as sharing syringes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Learn more about syringe access and disposal, HIV and HCV prevention and testing services, and access needle exchange programs by contacting the Minnesota Department of Health, STD and HIV Section, PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975:

http://www.health.state.mn.us/syringe
(651) 201-5414

Learn more about drug treatment programs by contacting the Minnesota Department of Human Services Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division:

http://mn.gov/dhs/
(651) 431-2460

Learn more about safe disposal options for needles and syringes by visiting the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s website:

http://www.pca.state.mn.us

To order more brochures, or if you require this document in another format, such as large print, Braille, or cassette tape, call (651) 201-5414

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INTRODUCTION TO MINNESOTA STATUTE § 151.40

The Minnesota Syringe Access Initiative is a law that promotes pharmacy sales to help reduce the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) among people who have injection drug use (IDU). This includes the injection of medication, illicit drugs, and hormones where a sterile syringe and equipment are not available at all times. Along with needle exchange programs, pharmacy access is a thoroughly researched, proven disease intervention strategy.

This law, passed by the Minnesota State Legislature, began July 1, 1998. Since then, persons are able to purchase up to 10 new syringes/needles without a prescription at pharmacies that voluntarily participate with this initiative in Minnesota.

Key provisions of the legislation are available on the Minnesota Department of Health website, along with a list of participating pharmacies: http://www.health.state.mn.us/syringe

This legislation helps to reach people with injection drug use, providing information about drug treatment programs, harm reduction services, safe disposal information, and HIV/HCV prevention and testing services.

This public health strategy is supported by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials and the National Institutes of Health.

SYRINGE DISPOSAL

Proper disposal of used syringes is a critical issue for the Initiative. This is to avoid discarded needles on streets, playgrounds, parks and parking lots.

Safe home disposal tips:
- Use a commercial sharps disposal container from a pharmacy, medical supply store, or a mail-back collection program.
- Destroy needles at home with a sharps needle destruction device.
- Check with your doctor, local pharmacy or county hazardous waste site about sharps collection.
- If a clear plastic bottle is not available, a hard plastic container with a lid should be used for needle disposal;
- Put used needle or syringe point first into container. Keep the container handy when using and discarding needles;
- Keep cap on container when not putting in needles and store the container out of the reach of children;
- Containers can be ½ full of needles before disposal;
- Label a piece of tape “Do Not Recycle: Household Sharps” and put on the container;
- Place sealed container in your garbage bag and seal; and,
- This option is less safe! Check with local city departments or waste haulers as they may have other requirements. http://www.pca.state.mn.us.
- Needle exchange programs also offer disposal. If you need assistance accessing a needle exchange program, contact the Minnesota Department of Health, STD and HIV Section, (651) 201-5414.