

What are syringe service programs* (SSPs)?

- SSPs are community-based organizations that provide access to sterile needles and syringes for free. They collect and safely dispose of used syringes and other drug equipment.
- SSPs also provide a range of health services, including:
 - Overdose education and naloxone** distribution
 - HIV and hepatitis C testing and counseling
 - Drug treatment counseling
 - Support groups and drop-in counseling
 - Opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine
 - Referrals to physical and mental health care, drug treatment, meals and showers

How do SSPs help the community?

- SSPs provide free and sterile syringes, and collect used ones, to prevent transmission of HIV, hepatitis C and other infections.
- SSPs create a welcoming environment to build trust and engage people who may not be welcome in other settings.
- Since SSPs were established in New York City (NYC), they have helped reduce HIV and hepatitis C among people who inject drugs.
 - HIV among people who inject drugs declined from over 50% in 1991 to 13% by 2001. By 2016, just 2% of new HIV cases in NYC were among people who inject drugs.
 - Hepatitis C among people who inject drugs in NYC dropped by 30% from 1990 to 2001.

*Originally called syringe exchange programs, these programs were renamed to syringe service programs as the scope of work broadened to include a wide variety of health and social services. SSPs are funded and monitored by the New York City and New York State Health Departments.

**Naloxone is a safe medication that can save someone's life by reversing the effects of an opioid overdose.

Where can I find an SSP?

- There are 14 authorized SSPs across all five boroughs in NYC.
- For a list of SSPs in NYC, visit nyc.gov/health/map, click on “Drug and Alcohol Services” and then “Syringe Service Programs.” Please contact the SSP directly for hours of operation, location and services provided.

Can anybody visit an SSP?

- Yes! All services are free of charge, offered anonymously, and available to all.

Aren't syringes illegal in NYC?

- No. People who visit SSPs receive a card that allows them to legally carry and exchange as many syringes as needed.
- Since October 2010, New York State law allows the possession of syringes that contain a small amount of drug residue.

I've seen more syringes on the ground than usual. Are SSPs responsible for this?

- No! SSPs reduce syringe litter by providing places to safely dispose of used materials; outreach staff also clean up syringes in the community.
- In fact, research shows that syringe litter decreases in areas where these programs are located.

Don't SSPs increase drug use?

- No! Syringe service participation actually leads to safer injection practices, reduced drug use, and participation in drug treatment.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT NYC.GOV/HEALTH
AND SEARCH FOR **SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAMS****