

Petition to protect the Needle Exchange in Santa Cruz

By signing this petition, you are letting the Santa Cruz City Council know that you recognize that research shows that Needle Exchange programs:

- ***reduce the number of used syringes that are littered***
- ***reduce drug abuse in the communities in which they operate***
- ***reduce the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C in the entire community.***

For these reasons, the Needle Exchange should have the freedom to operate in locations where it will be most effective and should not be forbidden from having a permanent physical location in Santa Cruz's urban core.

If a Needle Exchange program is not accessible to drug users who rely on its services, problems associated with drug abuse will only get worse.

- The Santa Cruz Needle Exchange trades peoples' used needles for new ones at a close to 1:1 ratio. It connects people to drug treatment programs and also helps prevent the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C by offering free tests and condoms.
- Needles are easy to buy from pharmacies like Walgreens and CVS. However, Needle Exchanges are unique because that they require drug users to trade in their old needles.
- **Many academic studies support the fact that Needle Exchanges make it much easier for drug users to safely discard their old needles¹.**

For example, in Portland, Oregon, the number of improperly discarded syringes dropped by almost two-thirds after the implementation of a Needle Exchange program.

- Research by former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher found that the presence of a syringe exchange program does not increase the use of illegal drugs among participants, and in many cases, **a decrease in injection frequency has been observed among those attending Needle Exchange programs.**
- A Seattle study showed that **Needle Exchange participants were five times more likely to enter drug treatment than non-participant injection drug users.**

The research resoundingly shows that Needle Exchange programs are providing a great service to our community in tackling illegal drug use and properly disposing of used needles.

Please help spread the word about this petition! It is available online at tinyurl.com/NeedleExchangePetition. People can sign it online there or print out copies.

Turn in signatures to 109 Ladera Dr. Santa Cruz CA 95060 or contact 415 706 0904 or NeedleExchangePetition@Gmail.com

¹ <http://med.miami.edu/news/miller-study-finds-high-rate-of-used-syringes-on-miami-streets>
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16419554>