

HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTOR

PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR



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December 23, 2004

Re: Senate Bill 1159 (Vasconcellos) Chapter 608

Dear Contra Costa County Pharmacist:

Contra Costa Health Services is committed to reducing the transmission of blood-borne diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C. We support the United States Public Health Service recommendation that individuals who inject drugs use a new, sterile syringe for each injection to prevent the transmission of blood-borne pathogens.

In September 2004, Governor Schwarzenegger signed legislation that allows a pharmacist to sell a non-prescription syringe for human use if one of the following conditions are met:

1. The person is known to the pharmacist to have a medical need for a syringe; or
2. If the pharmacy is located in a county or city that has authorized non-prescription syringe sale, the pharmacist may sell or furnish up to 10 syringes if the pharmacy participates in the Disease Prevention Demonstration Project. This provision of the law expires on December 31, 2010.

On December 14, 2004, the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors authorized the Health Department to develop and implement a Disease Prevention Demonstration Project consistent with this legislation. To participate in this project, a Contra Costa pharmacy must:

- Register with the Contra Costa Health Department
- Certify that written information or verbal counseling will be provided at the time of selling or furnishing syringes on:
  1. How to access drug treatment;
  2. How to access testing and treatment for HIV and Hepatitis C;
  3. How to safely dispose of sharps waste.
- Store needles and syringes so they are not openly available to customers;
- Provide on-site, furnish, or make available for purchase, mail-back or personal sharps disposal containers that meet applicable federal and state standards.

We hope that you consider participating in this program as part of a public health commitment to reduce the spread of disease in our community. Contra Costa Health Services will work with you in this endeavor, including providing the counseling materials required as part of this Disease Prevention Demonstration Project.



Attached for your information is a copy of the legislation. For more information, or to register and obtain a packet of relevant counseling and referral information, please contact the Contra Costa Health Services AIDS Program at (925) 313-6771.

Sincerely,

Wendel Brunner, MD  
Director of Public Health  
Contra Costa Health Services

Enclosure – Senate Bill 1159