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BOARD OF HEALTH:	Bruce DeLong	George Bailey	Michael R. Beach
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November 16, 2021

ADMINISTRATOR: Liz Braddock, Health Officer

SUBJECT: Syringe Service Program

Information Only

Action Needed

I. Authority For This Action:

Local Policy

Law or Rule

II. Summary:

The Medical Director’s Report for November gives a comprehensive summary of Harm Reduction Programs that includes a Syringe Service Program (SSP).

III. Strategic Objective, Health Issue, or other Need Addressed:

Incidence of HIV infection is increasing in West Michigan while cases in Michigan are declining overall. Recent surveillance by Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) Epidemiologists noted recent cases that are associated with intravenous drug use in Montcalm County. Presently, individuals needing access to clean needles can only obtain them by driving to a neighboring county for service and individuals could be arrested for being in possession of drug paraphernalia.

Decades of peer-reviewed research show needle exchange programs reduce incidents of HIV, hepatitis and other viral infections from contaminated needles, participants are more likely to seek treatment, and generally save taxpayer money. A recent study also indicated drug users participating in needle exchanges are less likely to have an overdose-associated hospital admission.

The Public Health Code allows for approved needle exchange programs to be in place and individuals that are receiving syringe supplies are exempt from drug paraphernalia laws since under the Public Health Law syringes are not considered to be drug paraphernalia when used for preventing disease transmission.

Public Health Code Act 368 of 1978 (excerpt)

333.7457 Applicability of MCL 333.7451 to 333.7455. (Sale of drug paraphernalia)

Sections 7451 to 7455 do not apply to any of the following:

(f) An object sold, offered for sale, or given away by a state or local governmental agency or by a person specifically authorized by a state or local governmental agency to prevent the transmission of infectious agents.

IV. Fiscal Impact and Cost:
(Immediate, ongoing, and future impact.)

Partnership with an established service provider would not incur any financial burden to the Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD).

V. Alternatives Considered:
A harm reduction program would have the greatest benefit in an at-risk area.

VI. Recommendation:

Obtaining community and leadership support is critical for the success of SSP. I request that the Board of Health support a resolution that allows SSP in the District.

The Board of Health of Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD), a recognized local governmental agency, authorizes MMDHD and agencies designated by MMDHD District to operate harm reduction programs or syringe and needle exchange within the territories of Montcalm, Gratiot, and Clinton Counties for the purposes of preventing the transmission of infectious agents as permitted by the Public Health Code. Injection supplies distributed as part of this programing are considered exempt from the drug paraphernalia laws.

VII. Monitoring and Reporting Timeline:
(Evaluation method and timeline. Next report to the Board.)

MMDHD will notify the BOH of our progress in working with community and partners to bring a Syringe Service Program to Montcalm County. MMDHD will continue to work with State Epidemiologists to review HIV and STI rates within the District.