

July 3, 2008

Thomas Mayfield  
1010 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 6500  
Modesto, CA 95354

Dear Chairman Mayfield:

On behalf of Save Our Society From Drugs, a nonprofit organization working to reduce illegal drug use, drug addiction, and drug-related illness and death, I am writing to urge you to reject needle exchange programs in your community. At the request of one of your constituents, we would like to take this opportunity to share our concerns regarding the disastrous implications of such programs:

- Needle exchange programs were well intended ideas but when one takes the time to find out who is really behind the push for such programs, those good intentions disappear. George Soros has given millions to support both drug policy reform and so-called needle exchange programs which are more like “giveaway” programs. Soros himself admitted that NEPs are a step closer to drug legalization. The Drug Policy Alliance, a pro-legalization group funded primarily by Soros, often relies on anecdotal evidence to support such programs but cannot provide the science to back up its claims that giving away needles will reduce AIDS and Hepatitis C. Teaching America how to use drugs safely - the underlying idea of “harm reduction” is no different than encouraging drug use and the crime and violence surrounding this culture.

- The state of Illinois set up a commission to deal with the issue of needle/syringe exchanges. The commission found that in Switzerland, NEPs led to a dramatic increase in drug addiction and violence. Perhaps the most alarming discovery was in the Vancouver needle exchange program where 40% of Vancouver’s HIV infected addicts had shared needles - even though 92% of them had participated in needle exchange programs. Within ten years of the launch of Vancouver’s program, deaths from overdoses went from 18 to 520 per year!

- Studies have shown that treatment for addiction reduces drug abuse and the sharing of injecting drug paraphernalia; not abandoning addicts to the devastation of their disease by supplying them with the tools they need to lock themselves in the prison of addiction. NEPs rarely, if ever, refer addicts to treatment and/or transition them into a treatment program. Simply put, needle exchange programs enable the addicted.

- The scientific evidence does not support the efficacy of NEPs. Four different studies of 25 cities with NEP’s published in 2004 reported the following: 70% of all intravenous drug users continue to share needles, unprotected sex is a major cause of the spread of blood borne diseases, Hep C reached epidemic levels in some cities studied, the number of new young addicts increased, and drug dealing and crime increased. The four studies were: Pulse Checks: Trends in Drug Abuse, January 2004,

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Dr. Fred Payne's Evidence Based Review of Needle Exchange Programs, the study by DAWN, and the study by the New York Academy of Medicine.

- Needle giveaway supporters point to a number of studies that claim such programs are succeeding in reducing the spread of HIV. The problem with this claim is that they are depending upon research that uses improper statistical models or lacks the hard data relating to HIV among users in the program vs. non-users.

- Needle giveaway programs distribute millions of needles every year with little or no accountability for the needles once they have been distributed. The idea of dirty needles being haphazardly discarded in public places raises legitimate concern to affected communities. A 2001 survey conducted by centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that in 1998 over 19,397,527 needles were handed out, and at best 62% were exchanged, meaning that 7-8 million needles were unaccounted for.

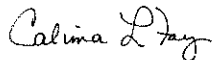
- In order to be successful, NEPs rely on IV drug users to show up at certain locations on certain days and at certain times to return their used needles. Addicts are not typically responsible citizens, and when under the influence, an addict will not be concerned about disposing of his/her needle properly. Placing responsibility on addicts and asking them to have the self discipline to follow through is perhaps the biggest flaw in NEPs.

- Needle exchange programs send a confusing message to your youth. Telling them not to use drugs but handing out needles reduces the perception of harm and undermines prevention and treatment efforts. Children need a clear message; giving out needles to junkies sends the wrong message to the youth of Stanislaus County.

- Vancouver, British Columbia, administers the largest needle giveaway program in North America, distributing nearly 3 million needles every year. When the program was established in the 1980s, the estimated HIV prevalence was 1 to 2 percent. Now, rather than decreasing HIV rates, both HIV and Hepatitis C have reached saturation among the IV drug user population, and the HIV prevalence rate among the Vancouver study population is 35 percent, one of the highest percentages reported worldwide.

In closing, I urge you to make your decision based on what research has shown - needle giveaway programs don't work and only enable and promote the lifestyle of those who are addicted.

Sincerely,



Calvina Fay  
Executive Director