



Monterey County

168 West Alisal Street,
1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901
831.755.5066

Board Report

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Matter Type: BoS Agreement

- a. Authorize Access Support Network (ASN), pursuant to RFP No. 105723, under California Health & Safety Code Section 121349.1 to operate under the Public Health Bureau's oversight and pursuant to all applicable local, state, and federal laws, a Syringe Exchange Program (SEP) within Monterey County; and
- b. Approve and authorize the Contracts/Purchasing Officer or Contracts/Purchasing Supervisor to sign a Standard Agreement with Access Support Network (ASN) for the Syringe Exchange Program (SEP) services to clients who are eighteen (18) years or older, pursuant to RFP No. 105723, for the period of November 15, 2016 to June 30, 2018.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Authorize Access Support Network (ASN), pursuant to RFP No. 105723, under California Health & Safety Code Section 121349.1 to operate under the Public Health Bureau's oversight and pursuant to all applicable local, state, and federal laws, a Syringe Exchange Program (SEP) within Monterey County; and
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SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

California Assembly Bills 547, 110 and 604, chaptered into Health and Safety Code (HSC), allow counties to authorize a syringe exchange program. The goals of a county syringe exchange program are to minimize the risk of disease transmission within the injection drug using community, to facilitate enrollment of individuals into drug and alcohol treatment programs, and to promote the safe storage and proper disposal of used needles and syringes. Monterey County Board of Supervisors first authorized syringe exchange on December 20, 1994. Syringe exchange programs operated in Monterey County until June 2015, when the County's authorized provider of syringe exchange services, Central Coast HIV/AIDS Services, closed its business.

In July 2015, the Public Health Bureau began the process for re-establishing a syringe exchange program. A Request for Proposal (RFP) process selected Access Support Network (ASN) as the most qualified agency. Monterey County Health Department seeks to enter into an Agreement with Access Support Network. Access Support Network staff and Board of Directors endorse the expansion of their supportive services programs to include a syringe exchange program. Access Support Network and Monterey County Health Department strive to improve the quality of life and independence of the injection drug use (IDU) community

through syringe exchange and harm reduction services. Access Support Network has been providing supportive services to individuals living with and at risk for infection with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) in Monterey County since July 2015.

Numerous scientific studies have shown that syringe exchange as part of a comprehensive program to reduce harm associated with re-using and sharing needles and syringes can help to decrease the transmission of bloodborne pathogens among the injection drug use community. The IDU community includes not only individuals that use needles and syringes to inject illegal drugs, but also their intimate partners that can become infected through sexual contact. Pregnant women who inject or pregnant women who are intimate partners to IDU individuals who become infected with HIV, HCV or HBV can also transmit these viruses to their newborn children.

Studies have also found that syringe exchange programs do not encourage people to begin using drugs and do not increase the amount of discarded drug paraphernalia near syringe exchange sites. In fact, metropolitan areas with syringe exchange programs that have participated in scientific studies and program evaluations have experienced a decrease in the number of discarded syringes in the vicinity of syringe exchange services. Studies also show that there is no evidence of increased youth drug use or increased frequency of illegal drug injection.

In addition, there is no indication in peer-reviewed literature that access to syringe exchange programs increases crime. Studies show that law enforcement arrest patterns were not significantly different in areas served by syringe exchange programs than in other areas. Federally funded research has shown that syringe exchange programs do not attract injection drug users from other communities and has shown that there was no impact on the ability of law enforcement to make drug arrests.

Bloodborne pathogens including HIV, Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), and HCV present a serious threat to the IDU community in Monterey County. In 2015, 38 Monterey County residents were reported with new HIV infections. Among these individuals, 8% indicated injection drug use as the source of exposure to the HIV virus, either alone or in combination with another risk behavior. HCV infection is the second most commonly reported communicable disease among all Monterey County residents, with over 850 new cases reported in 2015.

This work supports the Monterey County Health Department 2011-2015 Strategic Plan Initiatives: 1. Empower the community to improve health through programs, policies, and activities, and 3. Ensure access to culturally and linguistically appropriate, customer friendly services. Additionally, this work supports two of the 10 Essential Public Health Services: 3. Inform, educate and empower people about health issues; and 4. Mobilize community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel, Risk Management, and the Auditor-Controller have reviewed and approved this Agreement as to legal form, liability and fiscal provisions respectively.

FINANCING:

This Agreement is financed by vendor ASN's own funding sources. There are no costs to the County for this action.

Prepared by: Patricia McFadden, 4726

Approved by: Elsa Jimenez, Director of Health, 4526

Attachments:

Agreement is on file with the Clerk of the Board