



Harm Reduction Institute  
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**DESPITE TEMPORARY RESCISSION OF ITS AUTHORIZATION, HARM REDUCTION INSTITUTE REMAINS COMMITTED TO STOPPING THE SPREAD OF HIV AND OTHER BLOODBORNE DISEASES IN SANTA ANA.**

SANTA ANA. Harm Reduction Institute (HRI) remains committed to distributing clean syringes and providing life-saving naloxone and other health services to the most vulnerable populations in Santa Ana. Last week, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) opted to rescind HRI's formal authorization to run a syringe exchange program in order to further engage with Santa Ana law enforcement officials regarding their concerns and the merits of syringe exchange programs. This effort comes after a lengthy public comment period and CDPH's extensive efforts to engage public officials, including County Public Health leaders.

The California legislature has recognized that providing clean needles and syringes does not increase drug use and, in fact, can lead to treatment and recovery<sup>1</sup>. Studies have also shown that needle exchanges can curtail the spread of HIV and other bloodborne diseases. Based on this evidence, the Legislature authorized cities and counties to establish their own needle exchange programs. The Legislature also authorized CDPH to allow qualified private groups to conduct needle exchanges "notwithstanding any other law." Such needle exchanges may be authorized after a 45-day public comment period and CDPH consultation with local health and law enforcement officials<sup>2</sup>.

According to HRI Executive Director Carol Newark, HRI worked hard to satisfy state requirements and qualify as a state-authorized syringe exchange program. Among other actions, HRI met with city officials and local civic and public health leaders to exchange ideas, understand concerns, and explain HRI's planned efforts to safely collect discarded needles. "We welcome CDPH's decision to make even greater efforts to consult with local law enforcement officials and to better understand their concerns. We hope and expect that after these consultations, CDPH will reissue the authorization so we can start serving the most marginalized and under-represented members of this community," said Carol Newark. "In addition to helping stop the spread of bloodborne diseases such as Hepatitis C and HIV, we also strive to prevent overdose deaths and connect people to health and social services."

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact HRI by email:  
[info@harmreductioninstitute.org](mailto:info@harmreductioninstitute.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Health and Welfare Code §121349(a)

<sup>2</sup> Health and Welfare Code §121349(b) & (c)