

Facts

- **80-90% of King County IDU are already infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV).**

HCV is now the main contributor to liver problems requiring transplants countywide. HCV is so easily transmitted that many IDU become infected within the first few months after beginning injection drug use.

- **70% of King County IDU have evidence of exposure to hepatitis B (HBV).**

Some IDU are chronically infected, adding to liver disease and transplantation needs.

- **Over 50% of new HIV infections nationally are among IDU.**

HIV is fortunately less prevalent in King County IDU. Only about 3% are infected thanks to Needle Exchange and other prevention efforts. Given the high prevalence of HCV, however, HIV's potential for rapid spread continues to be great.

- **There are other serious and socially expensive complications stemming from the use of non-sterile injection equipment, including bacterial endocarditis.**



This collaboration has been a very positive and successful venture. I would encourage and support anyone who is thinking about signing up for this program.

Steve Whitehead R.Ph.
Pharmacy Manager, Bartell Drugs, Third & Union

Public Health's goals are to:

- Prevent new blood-borne infections.
- Reduce the negative consequences of injection drug use.
- Facilitate entry into drug/alcohol treatment.

Please assist Public Health to achieve these goals.

Become a Public Health partner.
Contact Robert Marks, campaign coordinator, at
(206) 205-5510 or robert.marks@metrokc.gov

With your help,
we can protect the health of **all**
King County residents and communities.



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**Public Health
Needs
You!**

**EXPANDED SYRINGE ACCESS
CAMPAIGN**

Expanded Syringe Access Campaign

Public Health - Seattle & King County is seeking pharmacists to collaborate with Public Health in selling new, sterile syringes for the purpose of preventing the transmission of HIV, hepatitis, and other blood-borne infections among injection drug users (IDU).



Law

Current law in Washington (RCW 70.115.050) states:

Retail sale of hypodermic syringes, needles -

Duty of retailer:

“On the sale at retail of any hypodermic syringe, hypodermic needle, or any device adapted for the use of drugs by injection, the retailer shall satisfy himself or herself that the device will be used for the **legal use** intended.”

In 1999, the WA State Board of Pharmacy determined that **legal use** “includes the distribution of sterile hypodermic syringes and needles for the purpose of reducing the transmission of blood-borne diseases. Such distribution shall be performed through public health and community-based HIV prevention programs.”

Washington State Board of Pharmacy, Newsletter Vol.21, No.2:1.

In 2002, Washington State amended drug paraphernalia law to further clarify legal restrictions regarding syringes (RCW 69.50.4121 and 1998 c 317 s 1 and RCW 69.50.412 and 1981 c 48 s 2). The revised statute specifically exempts pharmacies from any penalties associated with syringe distribution. It also allows individuals over the age of 18 to possess sterile hypodermic syringes and needles for the purpose of reducing blood-borne diseases.

Pharmacists can play a leading role in controlling the spread of blood-borne illness!

We are seeking King County pharmacies to collaborate with Public Health in selling new, sterile syringes to diabetics **and** injection drug users with or without a prescription.

A signed memorandum of understanding by both your pharmacy manager and the Public Health Director assures compliance with pharmacy board regulation and Washington State law. This understanding recognizes your pharmacy as a “community partner” of Public Health in providing access to sterile syringes to protect individual and community health.



This is an excellent opportunity for community pharmacies to continue to demonstrate their commitment to improving health care.

Dean Webb R.Ph., M.S.
Chief of Pharmacy
Public Health - Seattle
& King County

With this understanding Public Health provides:

- Written health materials for free distribution to pharmacy customers, including options for how to obtain drug/alcohol treatment.
- Free anonymous/confidential HIV and hepatitis counseling and testing at nearby sites.
- Free training for pharmacy staff on the prevention of HIV, hepatitis and other blood-borne infections.

Participating pharmacies agree to:

- Offer retail sales of new, sterile syringes to persons who use drugs by injection.
- Provide information to customers concerning:
 - Safe, legal, and free disposal of used needles/syringes.
 - Prevention of disease, including HIV, hepatitis, and other blood-borne infections.
 - Value and availability of drug/alcohol treatment.
 - Value and availability of HIV counseling and testing.
- Request training, as necessary, from Public Health on the prevention of HIV, hepatitis and other blood-borne infections.

