

Coalition for Responsible Syringe Policy

Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Illinois Nurses Association

Illinois Public Health Association

Illinois Pharmacists Association

Illinois Retail Merchants Association

Illinois State Medical Society

Illinois Association of Public Health Administrators

Illinois Planned Parenthood Council

Illinois Academy of Family Physicians

Illinois Council of Health System Pharmacists

ACLU of Illinois

Illinois Chapter, National Association of Social Workers

Chicago Department of Public Health

Cook County Bureau of Health

Cook County Department of Public Health

AIDS Foundation of Chicago

Walgreen Company

Chicago Bar Association – Lesbian/Gay Rights Committee

Support SB 880

SB 880 (Feigenholtz, Wirsing, Delgado, Miller, and Osmond) amends the Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act to allow adults to purchase syringes at pharmacies without a prescription.

Injection drug use is fueling the AIDS and hepatitis epidemics in Illinois:

- 1 of every 2 new HIV infections results from injection drug use. (Wash. Dept. Pub. Health)
- Approximately 4 million Americans have hepatitis C, making it the most common blood-borne infection in the country. (CDC)
- More than 28,000 Illinoisans have been diagnosed with AIDS. (IDPH)
- 70% of AIDS cases among women, and nearly all pediatric AIDS cases in Illinois are associated with syringe sharing. (IDPH)
- Syringe sharing is the primary source of new hepatitis C infections, and syringe sharing combined with unprotected sexual contact with an injection drug user is the primary source of new HIV infections. (CDC; Wash. Dept. Pub. Health)
- Only five states – Illinois, California, Delaware, Massachusetts, and New Jersey – have a law requiring a prescription to purchase a syringe.

Expanding access to sterile syringes reduces HIV and hepatitis transmission without increasing drug use:

- Over 40 scientific studies show conclusively that increasing access to sterile syringes reduces new HIV or hepatitis infections without increasing drug use.
- Deregulated syringe sales in Connecticut led to a 40% decrease in syringe sharing. (JAIDS, 1998) A similar law in Minnesota led to a 17% decrease in syringe sharing in the first year after the law was passed. (JAPhA, 2002)
- A 1992 study showed that injection drug users in St. Louis, where syringes may be purchased without a prescription, had an HIV infection rate of 3% compared to injection drug users in Chicago with an HIV infection rate of 30%. (AJPH, 1992)

SB 880 is good public health policy and will reduce HIV and hepatitis infections:

- SB 880 allows individuals 18 and older to purchase and possess up to 20 syringes without a prescription as a way to decrease syringe sharing and the transmission of HIV and hepatitis.
- SB 880 directs the Illinois Department of Public Health to provide syringe disposal and drug treatment information to all pharmacists to distribute with each sale so individuals purchasing syringes are educated on important issues.
- SB 880 directs the Illinois Department of Public Health to issue guidelines on syringe disposal so that all Illinois communities can develop disposal programs that are responsive to local needs.
- SB 880 requires that syringes be kept behind the pharmacy counter and dispensed by pharmacy staff to ensure that individuals purchasing syringes have the opportunity to ask questions and receive educational materials.
- SB 880 repeals an unnecessary and burdensome requirement that pharmacists report, to the state police, the names of individuals purchasing syringes without a prescription.

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