



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS

1493 CAMBRIDGE STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

Melvin H. Chalfen, M.D.
Commissioner

Robert W. Healy
City Manager
City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

March 23, 1993

Council Order #05, 3/7/94
Status Report, Needle
Exchange Program.

Dear Mr. Healy;

I have enclosed a report on the status of this program written by Mark Gray, the Executive Director of Cambridge AIDS Programs and Cambridge Cares About AIDS (CCAA). CCAA coordinates the Cambridge component of the program.

This program is a one year pilot syringe exchange program in Cambridge and Boston. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has been authorized by the state legislature to conduct this public health strategy to prevent the spread of HIV infection among injection drug users.

Planning aspects of the program include coordination and discussion with other departments such as the Police Department, The Cambridge Hospital (TCH) Substance Abuse Treatment staff, the TCH Multidisciplinary AIDS Program (MAP) and with neighborhood groups.

The attached report details how this project fits into the broader strategies for linking persons into drug treatment programs, decreasing the number of contaminated needles on the streets and decreasing the transmission of other blood borne diseases such as hepatitis B and C.

The report notes the success of the program in other communities and the lack of significant adverse effect in those communities over the past four to five years.

Yours sincerely,

Melvin H. Chalfen, M.D.
Commissioner, Health and
Hospitals.

MHC

Cambridge Cares



ABOUT AIDS

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Melvin Chalfen, Commissioner of Health and Hospitals
From: Mark Gray, Executive Director of AIDS Programs
Re: Syringe Exchange Program Status Report
Cambridge Syringe Exchange Program
Date: March 24, 1994

In March, a one year pilot syringe exchange program began in Cambridge and Boston. The state legislature authorized the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to conduct this public health strategy to prevent the spread of HIV infection among injection drug users, their sexual partners and children born to a mother who is either an injection drug user or is a sexual partner of an infected injection drug user. In Massachusetts, as of March 1, 1994, 30% of all reported AIDS are among injection drug users. Transmission of the AIDS virus (HIV) is directly related to injecting drug use through the sharing of contaminated drug paraphernalia.

The Cambridge component coordinated by Cambridge Cares About AIDS (CCAA) will consist of 3 or 4 stationary sites located throughout the city. The program started in Cambridge at the Cambridge Hospital Zinberg Clinic. This syringe exchange site is only available for Zinberg Clinic clients at regularly scheduled visits. No site other than the Zinberg Clinic will open in Cambridge until a series of sites are identified and opened at the same time. Potential sites are being considered in the Central Square, Harvard Square, Porter Square and North Cambridge areas as well as at the Cambridge Hospital. This will ensure a dispersion of syringe exchange sites throughout the city. CCAA is engaging in discussions about siting and other aspects of the program with neighborhood groups from these parts of the city.

At a meeting with the Central Square Neighborhood Coalition about implementation of the syringe exchange program, the Coalition expressed the opinion that the program should commence in Boston and Cambridge at the same time as well as simultaneously in several locations throughout the City of Cambridge. They maintained that the sites should be located throughout the city and that existing neighborhood clinics affiliated with the Cambridge Hospital would be the best sites. They expressed interest in the program evaluation criteria and concern that any negative impacts on neighborhoods be addressed as the program is

evaluated which included participants not purchasing, transporting or using drugs openly in their neighborhoods.

An important part of the initiative will be linkage to drug treatment. The program will be directly connected to medical, substance abuse and social services and is committed to facilitating access to treatment services for syringe exchange participants. Case manager contact is expected to result in increased admissions to treatment of injection drug users who have not been actively seeking treatment and who know they are HIV positive or who may be infected but have not been tested.

DPH has set aside \$200,000 in treatment funds for syringe exchange program participants referred to treatment services. The funds are allocated as follows: methadone treatment \$50,000, residential detoxification \$50,000, residential rehabilitation \$75,000 and outpatient counseling \$25,000.

Each site will operate for a two (2) hour period once a week and will be staffed by two case managers able to assist with accessing and identifying services or programs that participants may need.

The program will exchange syringes on a one to one basis; one clean syringe for one used syringe. The program will not increase the number of syringes in the community. No one will receive a clean syringe unless they already have another syringe. Persons 18 years of age or older may enroll in the program. Each enrollee will be issued an identification card with an identifying number. A maximum of ten (10) syringes will be exchanged at one time.

Contaminated syringes exchanged will be disposed of by a licensed hazardous waste company which will reduce the number of dirty syringes thereby decreasing the risk of accidental needle sticks. The transmission of other serious blood borne diseases such as Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C will also be addressed by needle exchange.

A 1993 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study on the health impact of needle exchange programs in the United States and abroad indicates reduction in HIV infection rates amongst injection drug users and no increase in community levels of drug use. The report states that each HIV infection prevented will avert the \$119,000 lifetime cost of treating an HIV-infected person.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

ROBERT W. HEALY

City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI

Deputy City Manager

April 4, 1994

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 10, regarding a status report on the proposed Needle Exchange Program, received from Mr. Melvin Chalfen, Commissioner of Health & Hospitals.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachment

Consent Agenda # 4

5-143

Response to Awaiting Report Item Number
Ten regarding a status report on the
proposed Needle Exchange Program.

*for original order
see - 1994 City manager
requests # 70.*

In City Council,

April 4, 1994

Placed on file.