



Connecticut AIDS Resource Coalition

MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR SYRINGE EXCHANGE A KEY HIV PREVENTION PROGRAM!!

Key Points on Connecticut's Syringe Exchange Programs

- Syringe exchange has been **scientifically proven** to effectively prevent the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C.
- Currently, there are **five syringe exchange programs (SEPs) around the state** – Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Stamford, and Danbury. As you can see, a great portion of the state has absolutely no coverage or easy access to the wide range of services provided by the staff on the syringe exchange vans.
- Despite the lack of funding, according to DPH the percentage of **newly diagnosed** AIDS cases among injecting drug users (IDUs) has actually **decreased significantly from 56% (1995) to 14.7% (2008)**.
- While the primary focus on the SEPs tends to be the syringe exchange itself, the SEPs actually do a tremendous amount of outreach to the most disenfranchised group of people in this state. Once engaged, the **SEPs provide education and information about a wide variety of health-related topics, assist people in accessing primary medical care, housing, HIV/AIDS services, provide HIV counseling and testing and help folks get into treatment.**
- From 1996 to 2004, SEPs in Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, New Haven and Stamford distributed 767,954 syringes and had 860,948 syringes returned. They **assisted nearly 3,000 people into treatment and provided close to 20,000 HIV prevention** and risk reduction sessions.
- This is an extremely small program (\$455,072) that reaps great benefits. Currently, there is a ban on the use of federal funds for syringe exchange.