

# Harm Reduction Laws in Minnesota

A little primer of the history and where  
we are now

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# Syringe Access at Pharmacies

- In 1998 MN passed a law allowing purchase of up to 10 new syringes/needles without a prescription at participating pharmacies
  - Individuals could legally possess up to 10 unused syringes
  - Pharmacies could not advertise the availability of syringes
  - Pharmacies were encouraged to also offer solutions for syringe disposal
- In 2023 this was updated to allow pharmacies to sell an unlimited number of sterile syringes
- MDH maintains a list of pharmacies. But...
  - “Individual pharmacists or pharmacy technicians may not be aware of the Syringe Access Initiative, may not have training around the initiative, or may not stock syringes and therefore do not participate. This variability can make accessing sterile syringes from pharmacies an unpredictable and frustrating experience for individuals.”*

# Syringe Service Programs (SSP)

- According to 2023 MN statute, SSPs were given legal protections and defined as “*a community-based public health program that offers cost-free comprehensive harm reduction services*”
- Activities, may include:
  - Providing sterile needles and other injection equipment
  - Making safe disposal containers available
  - Offering education on overdose prevention, safer injection practices, and infectious disease prevention
  - Providing blood-borne pathogen testing or referrals
  - Offering referrals to substance use disorder treatment, including MOUD
  - Providing referrals to medical treatment and services, mental health programs and services, and other social services.

# Drug Paraphernalia

- As of 2023 the possession of drug paraphernalia is no longer a crime, including paraphernalia with residual amounts of controlled substances
- Syringes and instruments to test the strength or purity of a substance are not considered paraphernalia (for example fentanyl test strips)

# Safe Injection Sites in MN?

- MN 2023 statute allocates funding for grants for harm reduction organizations to establish safe recovery sites which include safe injection spaces in addition to other services.
- Currently two overdose protection centers are operating in NY
- **General Goals:**
  - Reducing overdose deaths
  - Reduce health care costs
  - Reduce public drug use
  - Reduce spread of infectious diseases
  - Reduce drug related liter

# Harm Reduction Resources/links

## [ECHO Viral Hepatitis Resources - Hennepin Healthcare](https://www.hennepinhealthcare.org/project-echo/echo-viral-hepatitis-resources/)

<https://www.hennepinhealthcare.org/project-echo/echo-viral-hepatitis-resources/>

- Handouts
- Videos
- Principals of harm reduction

## [Opioid epidemic | Hennepin County](https://www.hennepin.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/opioid-response)

<https://www.hennepin.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/opioid-response>

- Monthly updated syringe calendar for MN
- Monthly updated meetings, services, and events

## [Syringe Service Program Network Calendar - MN Dept. of Health \(state.mn.us\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/syringe/calendar.html)

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