



new jersey family policy council

MAKING THE CASE for OPPOSING NEEDLE EXCHANGE

- **Crime Increases in Area of Needle Exchanges:**
 - **Crimes Due to Drug Use:** When a needle exchange program (NEP) moves in, associated crime and violence follows, including prostitution which contributes to the spread of AIDS. A spokesperson from the Coalition for a Better Community, a NY City based group opposed to NEPs, visited the Lower East Side Needle Exchange with a *NY Times* reporter. Their conclusion: "Since the NEP began we've seen an increase in dirty syringes on our streets, in schools yards, and in our parks...Brazen addicts shoplift, loot, and steal to buy drugs." Even exchange workers have been photographed selling needles off-site.¹ The recent murder of a 64-yr-old man who frequently visited his wife in a local hospital was found dumped in a building in a pool of blood in Halifax Nova Scotia, and it appears to be connected with the dangerous area he lives in surrounding a needle exchange. A neighbor, who lives in a nearby building said there's frequently trouble in at least one of the two downstairs apartments, including drug use, drinking and fighting, and he said "a lot of weird people" and "really rough customers" have been showing up. There have been a lot of fights, with people "hitting each other around and smacking each other," he said².
 - **Drug Dealers Blatantly Sell Near NEPs:** Commonly, drug dealers operate unimpeded by police when they are in the area of an NEP. For example, in Vancouver Canada's Downtown Eastside area "The dealers hang around with impunity on the corner of Hastings and Main and the police don't touch them."³ But, in Santa Cruz California, dealers conducting business along the San Lorenzo River levee grew too cocky for their own good. Courthouse personnel began to see the dealing from outside Department 7 — the county's drug court — so officers coordinated a sting and arrested and arraigned seven men at the courthouse, about 200 feet from a spot on the levee where detectives say they were selling their wares. Santa Cruz police Lt. Steve Clark said drug dealing along the levee has been a problem for at least seven years...". Sheriff's Sgt. Steve Carney said the dealers had gotten so comfortable they would set up shop in the early morning, packing a lunch "for a day of work" selling heroin, cocaine and other drugs. Rich Westphal of the county Narcotics Enforcement Team said unfortunately, those arrested are quickly replaced by other dealers who will just move down the river a short distance to meet the demand for illegal drugs. The drug traffickers work from Highway 1 to the ocean, he said, and officers keep chasing them⁴.
 - **Increased, Open, Injection drug Use in Areas surrounding NEP's** due to influx of users. In Downtown Eastside (Vancouver BC), police estimate there are 7,500 to 8,000 addicts, and users shoot up on the streets because the injection site has waits of up to 45 minutes⁵. More police had to be assigned to the area to try and minimize the number of users who were shooting up outside the NEP area.

¹ "Needle Exchanges Destroy Neighborhoods", Coalition for a Better community, 99 east Fourth Street,, NY, NY, April 8, 1996, and Statement, March 8, 1997, as cited in NJ Family Policy Council's "Family Findings: Needle Exchange Programs, Panacea or Peril", March 1999.

² "Police find Man dead in Blood-Spattered Room", The Halifax Herald Limited (Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada), Friday, December 12, 2003.

³ "City's New 'Harm Reduction Strategy' Threatens Neighborhoods and Enables Drug Use – But Council's Poised to Back it Anyway", The Toronto Sun, December 4, 2005 Sunday, COMMENT Sec.; The Final Say; Pg. C8, by Sue-Ann Levy.

⁴ Santa Cruz Sentinel (California) January 13, 2004, Cops bust up blatant drug dealing, By Cathy Redfern, Sentinel Staff Writer.

⁵ Crackdown's Working: Cops: Police say fewer users shooting up in public, by Lena Sin and Elaine O'Connor, Vancouver Province (British Columbia), Dec. 2, 2005. News Sec. p.A-29.

- **Community Dangers:**

- **Neighborhood Businesses Affected:** Dale Deslauriers, the owner of Save on Meats on West Hastings (Downtown Eastside, Vancouver BC), said business is down "at least 20 percent" because customers are afraid of drug users and dealers⁶.
- **Discarded Needles:** Reports of discarded needles in public places outside of NEP sites *abound* from cities with NEP's. Here is just one example. In Cairns Australia, City Place has been revealed as Cairn's biggest drug shooting gallery with 1000 syringes discarded since January in toilets and streets surrounding the inner city mall. Addicts are also dumping hundreds of used syringes at many of the city's other popular public places, including the Esplanade near Muddy's playground, the city library, in gardens and in various other public places. The figures were released by Cairns City Council after a recent audit of its sharps disposal bin program⁷.

- **Danger of Life:**

- **Overdoses/Deaths:** Due to the free and open availability of clean needles, addicts are enabled to shoot up as often as they can. This can lead to more deaths by drug overdose. A new study published in the journal *Addiction* finds that despite Baltimore's needle distribution program (the largest in the nation, distributing more than 6 mil. needles over the past 10 years) injection drug users (IDUs) there, triple their risk for death within two years of taking up the habit and those who inject for ten years have a death rate 8 times higher than those who do not⁸. A sad example of the culture of death that pervades NEPs, the following report from Vancouver is beyond belief. According to an article in the Canadian Press on September 6, 2005, addicts, crippled and blinded by their own drug use and too sick to shoot themselves up, will be helped by a team of users to get high "safely"⁹.
- **Disease Epidemics:** Both scientific and anecdotal evidence indicates that NEPs have failed to provide a prevention panacea for drug abusers against the dangers of HIV, hepatitis, and other health risks, which continue to increase at alarming rates. See our full report on this subject at <http://www.njpc.org/html/needleexchange.asp>.
- **The Slippery Slope of "Harm Reduction" Methods:** Toronto, Canada has had needle exchange programs for a number of years, but now, rather than spending needed money for rehabilitation programs they've approved a new "harm reduction scheme" which allows the distribution of so-called "safer" crack kits". The socialists on the city council have seemingly abandoned all reason and tacitly approved the use of an illegal drug like crack cocaine – when Toronto has been reeling from an epidemic of gun violence with crack largely at the root of the problem¹⁰. New Jerseyans and our legislature should take note of where this slippery slope of "harm reduction schemes" lead.

- **Young People Would Receive Mixed Messages:**

- **Due to their potential to take more risks, young people must receive a clear "NO" on Drugs:** Harm reduction campaigns like NEPs send the wrong message to the community and to young people. Rather than supporting the "zero tolerance" message that they are most likely receiving from home and currently in school, NEPs send the message "if you do decide to take drugs, we'll help you with clean needles". A report by Columbia University published in September 2001 is the most exhaustive study ever undertaken on data on substance abuse in schools and among students. The report's data illustrates that even one exposure or an early pattern easily becomes an addiction in young people. One of the key findings states, "relatively few students who experiment with a substance discontinue it's use. Among students who have ever tried cigarettes, 85.7 percent are still smoking in the 12th grade, of those who have ever been drunk, 83.3 percent are still getting drunk in the 12th grade, and of those who have tried marijuana, 76.6 percent are still using in the 12th grade."

⁶ The Vancouver Province (British Columbia), December 2, 2005 Friday, News Sec., Pg. A29.

⁷ "Syringe city; Drug Users Ignore Needle Bins as Hundreds Thrown Away in Streets Surrounding City CBD; Drug Users Not Dumping Syringes in Bins", By Sonia Campbell. The Cairns Post/The Cairns Sun (Australia), December 3, 2005, Saturday News Sec. Pg. 1.

⁸ "Shooting Up Triples Death Risk: New Users of Illegal Drugs Face Hike in Death Risk Early On, Study Finds, HealthDayNews, August 19, 2005.

⁹ "Sad Beyond Belief", John Coleman, Director, International Drug Strategy Institute, Drug Watch world News, September, 2005, p.9.

¹⁰ "Licence to Kill?; even Some Addicts Say 'Safe Injection Sites are Harmful' ", Sue-Ann Levy, Toronto Sun, Dec. 18, 2005, Comment section, p. 6.

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