

First District Health Unit

Good Neighbor Project Syringe Service Program (SSP)

SSPs are a harm reduction intervention authorized by ND Century Code 23.01.44 and scientifically proven to reduce the transmission of HIV, hepatitis B & C, and other bloodborne pathogens in persons who inject drugs. These programs also protect the public and first responders by facilitating the safe disposal of used needles and syringes.

Prevent the spread of communicable disease in the community

- Provide safe disposal of used syringes
- Keep contaminated needles from being left in public places, reducing the risk of accidental contact with exposed needles by the public or first responders
- Prevent the sharing of needles and supplies that spread disease
- Provide testing to determine HIV, hepatitis and STI status

Maintain the health of people in active substance use

- 75% of people with addiction recover
- Includes education on safer injection for HIV, hepatitis C and STI prevention
- Educate and train clients on drug overdose response, risk reduction and treatment
- Supply naloxone kits and train to reverse opioid overdoses
- Ensure access to fentanyl and xylazine test strips to prevent overdose
- Provide wound care kits to prevent infection
- Safer sex supplies including condoms and dental dams

Help program participants get connected to optional services including:

- Provide access to Peer Support and connection to other resources
- Testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis and others
- Referrals to medical care, substance use disorder treatment, mental health services, social services, housing, employment and more
- Referral to update immunizations including Hepatitis A & B
- Access to First District's Care Closet for donated clothing and hygiene supplies

Operations

- Strictly confidential – uses client numbers instead of names
- Operates 4 hours/day, 2 days/week, no appointment required
- Expectations for conduct are laid out in the first appointment – those who don't comply are removed from the program

2024 Outcomes

- 851 total SSP encounters
- 15,898 used syringes were collected through the SSP program
- 241.4 lbs of used syringes were collected in the public kiosk/drop box
- Overall, about 33% of participants have sought treatment

Notes from our clients

Hello. My name is Carli Boyko and I am an addict. Up until a few months ago my life was a whirlwind of chaos and self-destruction. The disease of addiction does not discriminate by any means. I had a happy childhood and my parents did what they could to help me along the way. But as time went on it became evident that I had chosen a very self-destructive path where the solution to my problems in life became a substance. At the tail-end of 12 years of active addiction, I somehow was referred to the First District Health unit: Harm Reduction Program. I truly believe this was a direct gift from God up above. I somehow fell into a program with a group of women who loved me unconditionally despite of my illness, who never judged me when I was at my lowest, who bandaged my wounds, and encouraged me with every visit to seek the help I truly needed. It's not just about the necessary physical tools that are provided. I believe this program is about so much more! These women handed me a flyer every week for 6 months with information for a program that would end up saving my life. They saw the person behind the substance while genuinely offering emotional support and hope for better days.

Today, by the grace of God, I can say I am 168 days clean from all mind altering substances! Words cannot truly express my gratitude for all that the ladies from the Harm Reduction Program did for me and ultimately my son and family. I am in month 5 of a year-long treatment program for women named Providence House. Thanks to the exchange program and the Board that makes it possible! I have the opportunity to live a new life in recovery and finally get the help I need. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Carli Boyko



Bonnie

Sometimes the world forgets that addicts are ~~just~~ people too. Thank you for not only treating us like human beings but for also going that extra mile to make us feel special, too. You have no idea how much that means to us !!

10-16-24

Love, ~~_____~~ ~~_____~~