







Pharmacists: Help Prevent HIV and Hepatitis C In Your Community

Pharmacists across California may sell or furnish up to 30 syringes to adults over 17 without a prescription, as of January 1, 2012, as part of the state's strategy to prevent the spread of HIV, hepatitis and other blood-borne pathogens.

Senate Bill 41 (Yee 2011) expands the role of pharmacists in this important work and removes prior restrictions on pharmacy practices.

The California Hepatitis Alliance, the Drug Policy Alliance, Project Inform, and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation thank the California Pharmacists Association for supporting SB 41.

What the new law does:

- Allows pharmacists and physicians to furnish or sell up to 30 syringes without a prescription to adults 18 years or older.
- Eliminates the requirement for counties to authorize these sales. You do not have to register with local health departments, keep logbooks, fill out paperwork, or ask for identification.
- To encourage safe disposal of sharps you must do at least ONE of the following:
 - 1. Make sharps containers available for purchase; and/or
 - 2. Make mail-back sharps disposal containers available for purchase; and/or
 - 3. Participate in syringe take-back and disposal.

How do we know it works?

Researchers evaluated a pilot program in several counties in California, and found that, consistent with research findings from other states:

- Injection drug users who purchased syringes from pharmacies were LESS likely to share injection equipment, reducing their risks of transmitting blood-borne diseases¹.
- Participating pharmacists reported only minor challenges in implementing syringe sales².
- There was no increase in unsafe discard of syringes in the community³.

Where to get more information:

The California Department of Public Health has written a letter and a fact sheet for pharmacists with more information on the new law, available at:

www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/aids/Pages/OASyringeAcce ss.aspx

¹ California Department of Public Health. SB 1159 Report: An Evaluation of Over-the-Counter Sale of Sterile Syringes in California. July 2010. Available at:

www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/aids/Documents/SB1159StateReportFinal.pdf

² Rose, V. and Raymond, F. "Evaluation of nonprescription syringe sales in San Francisco" J Am Pharm Assoc. 2010;50 3 California Department of Public Health, op cit.