

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 110

Introduced by Assembly Member Laird
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Berg, Evans, Hancock, Jones, and Leno)
(Coauthors: Senators Kehoe and Kuehl)

January 5, 2007

An act to amend Section 121349.3 of, and to add Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section 120780) to Part 4 of Division 105 of, the Health and Safety Code, relating to the use of state HIV prevention and education funds for distribution of needles and syringes.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 110, as introduced, Laird. Drug paraphernalia: clean needle and syringe exchange projects.

(1) Existing law, with certain exceptions, makes it a misdemeanor for a person to deliver, furnish, transfer, possess with intent to deliver, furnish, or transfer, or manufacture with the intent to deliver, furnish, or transfer, drug paraphernalia, knowing, or under circumstances where one reasonably should know, that it will be used to plant, propagate, cultivate, grow, harvest, compound, convert, produce, process, prepare, test, analyze, pack, repack, store, contain, conceal, inject, ingest, inhale, or otherwise introduce into the human body a controlled substance. Existing law provides an exception to this general rule by authorizing a public entity, its agents, or employees to distribute hypodermic needles or syringes to participants in clean needle and syringe exchange projects authorized by the public entity pursuant to a declaration of a local emergency due to the existence of a critical local public health crisis.

Existing law established the Office of AIDS in the State Department of Health Services. That office, among other functions, provides funding for AIDS prevention and education. Commencing July 1, 2007, the office will be transferred to the State Department of Public Health.

This bill would authorize a public entity that receives General Fund money from the State Department of Public Health for HIV prevention and education to use that money to support clean needle and syringe exchange projects authorized by the public entity. The bill would authorize the money to be used for the purchase of sterile hypodermic needles and syringes. The bill would require funds allocated for that purpose to be based upon epidemiological data as reported by the health jurisdiction in its local HIV prevention plan submitted to the Office of AIDS.

(2) Existing law requires the health officer of the participating jurisdiction to annually present a report on the status of clean needle and syringe exchange programs, including relevant statistics on blood-borne infections.

This bill would require the report to also include the use of public funds for these purposes.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) The continuing spread of the acquired immunodeficiency
- 4 syndrome (AIDS) epidemic and the spread of blood-borne hepatitis
- 5 pose two of the gravest public health threats in California.
- 6 (b) Injection drug users are the second largest group at risk of
- 7 becoming infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- 8 and developing AIDS, and they have been the primary source of
- 9 heterosexual, female, and perinatal transmission in California, the
- 10 United States, and Europe.
- 11 (c) According to the Office of AIDS within the State Department
- 12 of Public Health, injection drug use continues to be one of the most
- 13 prevalent risk factors for new HIV and AIDS cases in California.
- 14 Injection drug users continue to be at high risk of HIV/AIDS and
- 15 hepatitis infection in California. According to an annual report
- 16 issued by the Office of AIDS, sharing of contaminated syringes

1 and other injection equipment is linked to 20 percent of all reported
2 AIDS cases in the state through 2003. State data suggests that over
3 1,500 new syringe-sharing HIV infections occur annually.
4 According to recent studies, researchers estimate that an American
5 infected with HIV can expect to live about 24 years, on average,
6 and that the cost of his or her health care during this time period
7 is more than \$600,000.

8 (d) Injection drug users are also highly likely to become infected
9 with hepatitis as a result of hypodermic needle and syringe sharing
10 practices.

11 (e) The Legislature has responded to the spread of HIV and
12 hepatitis among injection drug users by adopting Assembly Bill
13 136 (Ch. 762, Stats. 1999), that permits localities to determine
14 whether or not to operate clean needle and syringe exchange
15 programs. As a result of that legislation, many localities are now
16 operating these programs.

17 (f) These programs have been shown to significantly reduce the
18 transmission of HIV and hepatitis among injection drug users,
19 their sexual partners, and children. Moreover, these programs have
20 been effective in moving individuals into substance abuse treatment
21 programs and in reducing the number of used hypodermic needles
22 and syringes disposed of in public places, which pose a threat to
23 public health and safety.

24 (g) The United States government prohibits the use of federal
25 funds to support the purchase of sterile hypodermic needles and
26 syringes by clean needle and syringe exchange programs.
27 Moreover, the state has not heretofore permitted the use of its funds
28 for the purchase of sterile hypodermic needles and syringes,
29 although current state policy allows state HIV prevention and
30 education funds to be used for costs associated with authorized
31 clean needle and syringe exchange programs, except for the
32 purchase of sterile hypodermic needles and syringes.

33 (h) The ability of clean needle and syringe exchange programs
34 to purchase an adequate supply of sterile hypodermic needles and
35 syringes is essential to California's ability to further reduce the
36 transmission of HIV and hepatitis and to relieve the public cost
37 for the care and treatment of HIV disease and hepatitis.

38 SEC. 2. Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section 120780) is
39 added to Part 4 of Division 105 of the Health and Safety Code, to
40 read:

1 CHAPTER 1.5. STATE HIV PREVENTION AND EDUCATION FUNDS

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3 120780. A public entity that receives General Fund money
4 from the State Department of Public Health for HIV prevention
5 and education may use that money to support clean needle and
6 syringe exchange projects authorized by the public entity pursuant
7 to existing law. The money may be used for, but is not limited to,
8 the purchase of sterile hypodermic needles and syringes. Funds
9 allocated for the purchase of sterile hypodermic needles and
10 syringes shall be based upon epidemiological data as reported by
11 the health jurisdiction in its local HIV prevention plan submitted
12 to the Office of AIDS within the department.

13 SEC. 3. Section 121349.3 of the Health and Safety Code is
14 amended to read:

15 121349.3. The health officer of the participating jurisdiction
16 shall present annually at an open meeting of the board of
17 supervisors or city council a report detailing the status of clean
18 needle and syringe exchange programs including, but not limited
19 to, relevant statistics on blood-borne infections associated with
20 needle sharing activity *and the use of public funds for these*
21 *programs*. Law enforcement, administrators of alcohol and drug
22 treatment programs, other stakeholders, and the public shall be
23 afforded ample opportunity to comment at this annual meeting.
24 The notice to the public shall be sufficient to assure adequate
25 participation in the meeting by the public. This meeting shall be
26 noticed in accordance with all state and local open meeting laws
27 and ordinances, and as local officials deem appropriate.

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