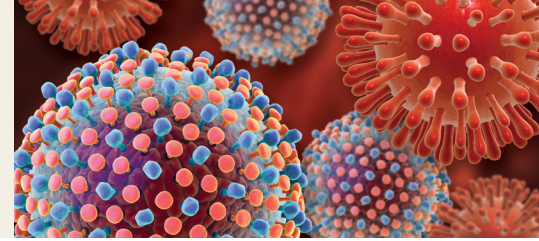


Addressing the Opioid Epidemic and Preventing the Spread of Infectious Disease Through the Provision of Syringe Services Programs



The South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health (IMPH) is a nonpartisan, non-profit committed to providing South Carolina's elected officials with nonpartisan information and research related to the health and well-being of our state's residents. IMPH serves as a neutral convener to collectively inform policy to improve health and health care in South Carolina.

In December 2019, IMPH published *Addressing the Opioid Epidemic and Preventing the Spread of Infectious Disease Through the Provision of Syringe Services Programs*. **The brief examines the related opioid, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C virus epidemics in our state and the effectiveness, cost-savings and opportunities of Syringe Services Programs (SSPs) as part of a comprehensive strategy for combatting the opioid crisis and reducing the spread of infectious disease.**

Main findings from the brief include:

- South Carolina is experiencing three related public health crises at the same time. The growing opioid crisis has greatly increased unsafe injection drug use, which in turn has increased how many people in our state have human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV).
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has verified that South Carolina is at high-risk for HIV and HCV outbreaks due to increased opioid use and unsafe drug injection activities in the state.
- Syringe Services Programs (SSPs) have been identified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other national public health leaders as a key component to combat the nation's opioid crisis and reduce the transmission of infectious disease.
- Evidence exists that comprehensive Syringe Services Programs (SSPs) reduce transmission of these viruses by providing multiple substance use disorder treatment options and risk-reduction services in addition to sterile injection equipment.
- Research shows that SSPs are safe, effective and help people enter recovery.
- SSPs can yield cost savings within one year of implementation, primarily through cost avoidance by preventing new cases of HIV and HCV.
- There is an estimated return on investment of \$7.58 for every \$1 spent on SSPs.
- Federal funds are available to South Carolina to create SSPs.
- State law currently prohibits SSPs. Therefore, state agencies eligible for federal funding, including the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and the South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS), cannot utilize this funding to implement SSPs.



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For more information, please visit IMPH.org or contact info@imph.org.

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