

# SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS IN NORTH CAROLINA INFORMATION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

## WHAT IS A SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM (SEP)?

Syringe exchange programs collect used syringes from people who inject drugs and exchange them for sterile syringes and access to social services, including substance addiction treatment.

## WHEN DID SYRINGE EXCHANGE BECOME LEGAL IN NORTH CAROLINA?

Syringe exchange programs became legal in North Carolina on July 11, 2016, the day Governor McCrory signed [House Bill 972](#) into law (G.S. 90-113.27). House Bill 972 also regulates the release of law enforcement body camera footage.

## WHAT DO SEPS PROVIDE FOR THE COMMUNITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT?

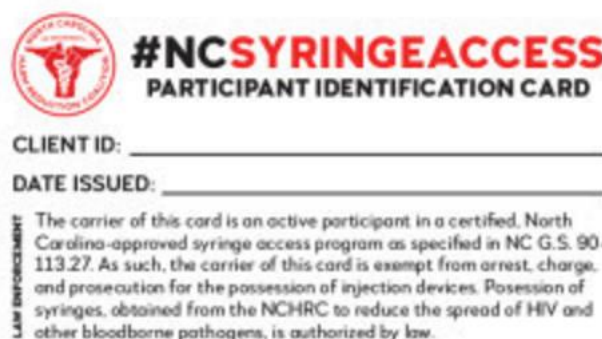
Syringe exchange programs offer the following benefits

- a) SEPs distribute sterile syringes in order to reduce needle-sharing and the transmission of blood borne diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C
- b) SEPs reduce the number of used syringes in public spaces because they collect used syringes and dispose of them safely
- c) SEPs lower needle-stick injury to law enforcement (because users return their used syringes to the exchange instead of carrying them)
- d) SEPs offer drug overdose prevention information and naloxone kits to participants
- e) SEPs provide participants with referrals to social services, including addiction treatment programs
- f) SEPs do NOT increase, encourage, or enable drug use or crime

## WHAT DO SEPS MEAN FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT?

According to G.S. 90-113.27, no employee, volunteer or participant of the syringe exchange can be charged with possession of syringes or other injection supplies, or with residual amounts of controlled substances in them, obtained from or returned to a syringe exchange. Syringe exchange programs will supply a card, letter, or other documentation to each participant stating that they obtained their syringes from the exchange.

Sample identification card:



## WHO CAN START A SYRINGE EXCHANGE IN NORTH CAROLINA?

Any governmental or nongovernmental organization “that promotes scientifically proven ways of mitigating health risks associated with drug use and other high risk behaviors” can start a syringe exchange program. This includes, but is not limited to harm reduction organizations, health departments, AIDS Service Organizations and community based organizations (CBOs).

## WHERE WILL THE SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS BE LOCATED?

The location of each program will vary depending on the geographic area and resources of the host organization, but there are several common locations for syringe exchanges.

- 1) Fixed site exchanges – exchange is located at a fixed site such as a storefront, local nonprofit, church, or public health department
- 2) Mobile exchange – exchange is run out of a vehicle that travels to various locations to deliver syringes and other services
- 3) Peer based or home delivery exchange – syringes and other services are delivered to people’s homes or other agreed upon locations
- 4) Integrated exchange – exchange is integrated into the existing structure of an organization such as a pharmacy, a drug treatment center, an AIDS service organization, etc.

## HOW CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS?

For more information, visit our website at [www.nchrc.org](http://www.nchrc.org) or contact Hyun Namkoong at [hnamkoong88@gmail.com](mailto:hnamkoong88@gmail.com) or 919-218-4505 at the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition.