

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Santa Barbara, CA 93101
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 6/28/06
Department Name: Public Health
Department No.: 041
Agenda Date: July 11, 2006
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: 20 minutes on 8/1/06
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Michele Mickiewicz, MPH, Interim Director
Public Health Department

STAFF CONTACT: Michael D. Harris, Deputy Director
Public Health Department 681-5439

SUBJECT: Needle Exchange and Education Program Authorization as per AB 547 (Berg)

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

Set a hearing on August 1, 2006, to consider authorizing the Needle Exchange and Education Program operated by the Pacific Pride Foundation, Inc. under agreement with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department as authorized by AB 547.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation is primarily aligned with:

Goal No. II. A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit.

Goal No. VII. A Community that Fosters the Safety and Well-Being of Families and Children.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

Assembly Bill 547 (Berg) was signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in October 2005. This legislation authorizes cities, counties, or cities and counties to have a clean needle and syringe exchange project as part of a network of comprehensive services upon the action of a county board of supervisors and the local health officer. AB 547 removes the need for approval of a bi-weekly emergency resolution by the Board at the request of the county health officer in order to lawfully operate a needle exchange program.

AB 547 requires that the health officer of the participating jurisdiction present annually at an open meeting of the Board of Supervisors a report detailing the status of syringe exchange programs. It further requires that local government, local public health officials, and law enforcement be given the opportunity to comment on syringe exchange programs on an annual basis and that the public be given the opportunity to provide input to local leaders to ensure that any potential adverse impacts on the public welfare of syringe exchange programs are addressed and mitigated.

Staff has discussed the existing Needle Exchange and Education Program with local law enforcement representatives. Their consensus is that the existing Needle Exchange and Education Program should

continue at this time. Should the Board authorize the continued operation of the Needle Exchange and Education Program, Public Health Department staff will meet with law enforcement to address issues related to this program. Although a public hearing isn't required for another year, staff will return to the Board in January with an administrative agenda item reporting the results of the meetings with law enforcement. As required by law, the County Health Officer will present a report annually each subsequent year on the status of the Needle Exchange and Education Program.

Pacific Pride Foundation has operated a local Needle Exchange and Education Program in Santa Barbara County since June 2000 in accordance with County Board of Supervisors Resolution 00-193. Pacific Pride is willing to continue to provide this service under the authorization provided by AB 547. The program is funded by private donations. The syringes collected in the program are disposed of through the County Health Department contract for biohazard waste collection. To date, almost 1 million used syringes have been disposed of properly and have been exchanged for clean needles on a one-for-one basis. The program promotes access to drug treatment, mental health services, HIV counseling and testing, Hepatitis C screening, medical treatment and housing opportunities. This program protects the public, law enforcement and other public safety workers by having used needles exchanged for clean needles that are disposed of properly.

Questions have been raised as to whether needle exchange programs could encourage drug use. AB 547 (Berg) states, "... *scientific data from needle exchange programs in the United States and Europe have shown that the exchange of used hypodermic needles and syringes for clean hypodermic needles and syringes does not increase drug use in the population, can serve as an important bridge to treatment and recovery from drug abuse, and can curtail the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection among the intravenous drug user population.*"

The Needle Exchange and Education Program is a vital link to multiple services for injecting drug users. At the end of this board letter is a partial listing of those national organizations that support needle exchange programs.

Mandates and Service Levels:

The Needle Exchange and Education Program operated under agreement by the Pacific Pride Foundation, Inc. is a non-mandatory program. This board action will eliminate the need for bi-weekly declarations of a local emergency. AB 547 (Berg) must be authorized in collaboration with the California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

This action does not increase the use of the General Fund contribution. Pacific Pride Foundation operates the Needle Exchange and Education Program at no cost to the County.

The action does not result in the need for additional facilities.

Special Instructions:

Please send a copy of the minute order to PHD Contracts Unit, 300 North San Antonio Road, Building 8, Santa Barbara, CA 93110. **Attention: Margaret Granger (805) 681-5367.**

Concurrence:

Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services
Santa Barbara County Alcohol & Drug Advisory Board

Endorsements for Needle Exchange Programs:

The American Medical Association

The American Society of Addiction Medicine

The American Public Health Association

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The American Bar Association

The United States Conference of Mayors

The National Academy of Science

The National Research Council

The National Commission on AIDS

The National Institute of Health Consensus Statement

The American Academy of Pediatrics