

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: November 25, 2003

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Dr. James Dunford, Chair
Clean Syringe Exchange Program Facilitation Committee

SUBJECT: Clean Syringe Exchange Program Special Report

In response to questions raised by residents of the North Park community at the June 17, 2003 City Council meeting, Councilmember Toni Atkins requested a special report on the operations of the Clean Syringe Exchange Program (CSEP). Attached is the report submitted by the program operator, Family Health Centers of San Diego (FHCS), and prepared by the Criminal Justice Research Division of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), which is contracted to evaluate the pilot program.

The Clean Syringe Exchange Program Facilitation Committee continues to monitor the pilot program. In response to a request from the community, the Committee is contracting (through FHCS) with the San Diego State University Social Science Research Laboratory to conduct a telephone survey of North Park residents. The survey, currently in the draft stage, is designed to solicit and analyze residents' opinions of the impact of the CSEP on their neighborhood since the program began operating in North Park in February 2003. In East Village, where the CSEP has been functioning since July 2002, the Committee is planning a forum designed to elicit feedback from downtown residents and representatives from area businesses and organizations.

The CSEP pilot study period concludes in February 2004. A final report with recommendations will be presented to the City Council within 90 days. That report will include the results of the neighborhood surveys as well as an analysis of any changes in crime-related activities in the areas around the two program sites. Data currently being collected include calls for service, arrests and citations, and crimes. The SDPD liaison to the Facilitation Committee regularly reports on complaints received from North Park community members who believe individuals using the exchange program are engaged in criminal activity; although SDPD officers have followed-up and investigated each of these complaints, there have to date been no arrests with a known nexus to the CSEP at either site.

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The Facilitation Committee has recently convened a subcommittee that includes members of the Committee, residents of the participating neighborhoods and City staff. This group has begun work on a draft City ordinance which would establish the guidelines under which an extended or expanded CSEP would operate in the City should that be the decision of the City Council.

If you have questions about the attached report, please call Staajabu Heshimu at (619) 236-6635. Staa will assist you in making an appointment with Dr. Cynthia Burke, Director of SANDAG's Criminal Justice Research Division, and/or Robert Lewis, FHCSO's Program Manager.