

Submitter: HIV Alliance Dane Zahner
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1573

Honorable Leaders
Thanks for having me today
Opposed
SB 1573
Dane Zahner, he/him, HIV Alliance

I live and reside in Rural Oregon, in the county of Douglas, and work in Roseburg. I provide Rural Harm Reduction in Douglas, Coos, Curry, and Josephine counties for the HIV Alliance

A restriction of 2,000 would be challenging in rural communities. This may make the service inaccessible to rural residents. Syringe Exchange services are proven to prevent HIV/HCV, skin tissue issues, and overdose, therefore loss of sites in rural communities is likely to increase the burden of substance those communities face. In addition, loss of SSP in rural locations will likely result in an increase in discarded syringes. In many communities, mobile SSP is the only resource for safe disposal of syringes.

We are not aware of reported issues related to the location of SSP in the communities where we operate. We encourage open dialogue about any verified incidents related to SSP location and advocate for a community-based approach to placement of sites rather than the state telling communities where to place sites. HIVA has been providing SSP services for over 20 years. In our experience, each community is different and has different needs, and SSP providers benefit from active engagement with local law enforcement and local county and city leadership. This is what results in safe placement of critical public health services.

HIV Alliance carefully sites our SSP services, often with community partners such as faith-based organizations and public health. We also manage sharps drop box locations for communities that allow everyone, including those using syringes medically, to safely discard their syringes. We actively monitor our sites to ensure there are no discarded supplies.

We are open to reasonable actions to reduce discarded syringes, such as adequate funding for SSP staffing, placement of publicly accessible drop boxes, and requirements for SSP providers to ensure that safe disposal policies are in place.

Thank you
Dane Zahner 541-968-2866
dzahner@allianceor.org