



Santa Cruz County Syringe Services Program Advisory Commission

1060 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
P: (831) 454-4623 F: (831) 454-4488 TTY/TDD 711

hsaphadmin@santacruzcounty.us

<https://bit.ly/SSP-Program>

Notice of Public Meeting and Agenda In Person Meeting

Date: Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Time: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 226 807 668 601 Passcode: pXkJux

Or Call in (audio only): [+1 831-454-2222,30724602#](tel:+1831454222230724602) United States, Salinas

Phone Conference ID: 307 246 02#

Physical Location** 1400 Emeline Ave, Rm #206/207
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

1. **Roll Call & Introductions**
2. **Review & Corrections of the Agenda**
3. **Review & Approval of March 14th Minutes and April 11th Minutes**
4. **Written Correspondence:**
5. **Oral Communications:** Any person may address the Commission on additional matters that are not on today's agenda, for a period not to exceed 3 minutes, within the jurisdiction of the Commission.
6. **Special Presentation-SSPAC Acknowledgement to Dr. Newel**
7. **Elect Chair and Vice Chair**
8. **Program Updates**
 - 8.1 Program Staff update: Report from 4/25 Board Meeting
 - 8.2 Julia Anderson update: Results from Conversations with PWUD in South County
9. **New Business/Action Item**
 - 9.1 The future of the community Engagement Ad-hoc subcommittee
 - 9.2 Discuss alternate site/locations for SSPAC meetings
 - 9.3 Invite Joseph Crottogini from Homeless Persons Health Project (HHPH) to June Meeting
 - 9.4 Discuss Commission Recruitment
 - 9.5 Invite Access Support Network (ASN) staff member to future meeting
10. **Topics for Future Meetings**
11. **Adjournment**

Next Meeting to be held on June 13, 2023, at 6:00 PM

The County of Santa Cruz does not discriminate based on disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. If you wish to attend this meeting and require special assistance to participate, please call 831-454-4623 (TTY/TDD: 711) at least 72 hours in advance to make arrangements.

Summarized from Santa Cruz County Code, Chapter 2.125, Commission objectives include: increase coordination between agencies, departments, jurisdictions, and other stakeholders and policies related to delivery of services provided by SSP; review pending State and Federal legislation that may impact SSP, consumers and/or providers; stay informed and educated on SSP and related public health strategies; provide a forum for consumers and other parties interested in syringe services to contribute ideas to policy and program development and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding any proposed changes.

Action Item: 3 Approval of Meeting Minutes

Action Required

Recommendation

Approve the March 14, 2023 Syringe Services Advisory Committee meeting minutes

Suggested Motion

I motion to approve the March 14, 2023 Syringe Services Advisory Committee meeting minutes

Recommendation

Approve the April 11, 2023 Syringe Services Advisory Committee meeting minutes

Suggested Motion

I motion to approve the April 11, 2023 Syringe Services Advisory Committee meeting minutes



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Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, March 14, 2023
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: 1400 Emeline Ave, Bldg. K, Rm 206
PRESENT: Damon Bruder (*3rd District*), Eric Sturm (*4th District*), Sarina King (*5th District*), Steve Plumb (*1st District*), appeared remotely and did not participate in any votes
EXCUSED: None
ABSENT: Joe Hernandez (*2nd District*)
STAFF: Rahshan Williams (*Program Coordinator*), Socorro Gutierrez (*Health Services Manager*), Nicky Meza (*Administrative Aide*), Lucero Cosio-Santos (*Administrative Aide*) Laurel Gazza (*Administrative Aide*)
GUESTS: Darcelle Pruitt (*Resource Planner*)

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions:
Meeting convened at 6:01 PM.
Chair Bruder Confirmed attendance.
2. Review and approve February 14, 2023:
Motion to approve Meeting Minutes
Motion/Second: King/Sturm
Motion passed unanimously.
3. Written Correspondence: none
4. Oral Communications:
Laurel Gazza spoke about being prepared in advance for the Commission meetings. By providing and posting materials to the public and to post prior to the meeting, allowing public and County staff to view the agenda items and to attend the meetings. Commission Liaison should be setting up a meeting in advance prior to the upcoming meeting with Commission member, program staff and any individual who will be presenting to discuss the preparation and collecting of Agenda items and meeting materials to submit for posting 72 hours prior to the meeting. This allows being transparent in the way business is conducted.
5. Presentation:

5.1 Darcelle Pruitt, Resource Planner III, from Community Development and Infrastructure/Recycling and Solid Waste is a guest today to present about the Sharps and Pharm program and the Syringe Services Program. The primary goals of the programs are to prevent the spread of infectious disease associated with injection drug use but to also address community concerns regarding improperly discarded syringes. The idea of the stewardship program is to make sure the manufacturers who are producing the products that end up as waste are taking responsibility for the end of life so the cost of disposal does not fall on the jurisdiction. Pruitt works on the waste side of the program and her predecessors worked on setting up the county codes sections that define the stewardship plans. All the drug companies that sell into CA are responsible to put a products stewardship plan and get it approved both at county level and by Power Cycle, a branch of California EPA that oversees waste management issues. Power Cycle is primarily responsibility at the State level for overseeing that the plans are in place, funded properly and managing the waste. County Program Drawbacks include, varied legal requirements, different code sections, varied County Jurisdiction authority and varied County funding. Program compliance oversight for SSP is under the State of Public Health and Board of Supervisors. CalRecycle provides sharps and pharm stewardship program compliance oversight. Commissioner asked how long has the sharps and pharm program been in the County and if other cities have similar programs where Pruitt responded the program may be in its 10th year and Watsonville and Santa Cruz do have areas where they collect syringes and have their own programs. Commissioner asked if the Sharps an Pharm has a committee or commission. Pruitt stated that this falls under the purview of this commission.

6. Program Updates:

6.1 Williams presented program updates. The MAT Access Point Grant was awarded on March 13th. This 16-month grant is to provide low barrier opioid treatment at SSPs, fund extra staff to work with participants, collaborate with local partners and improve tracking of substance use disorder treatment referrals. Commissioner asked how much the grant is for and Williams indicated it is for \$350,000. Funding is also for a nurse, MAT provider and supplies. On 3/2/23 staff were notified that the NASTAD grant was not awarded. Harm reduction supplies were distributed at fixed sites and at outreach/engagement between September 2022-December2022. Distribution of harm reduction supplies include local community partners. Williams presented key points from Commission meetings and program staff regarding the Directive from the Board of Supervisors to look into the possibility of moving the North County Syringe Services program out of Emeline. A comparison of service delivery models was presented for a mobile unit vs. a hybrid model. Commissioner asking if there is a timeline for the initiation of the hybrid model and if the recommendation will go to the Board to approve a change to the hours and to the location. Gutierrez indicated that the recommendation is to implement it for longer than six months to bring back information to identify if this model is reaching more participants and in different areas. Emily Chung, Public Health Director clarified that April 25th program staff will report to the Board the recommendations from the Commission based on the directives.

7. New Business/Action Items:

7.1 Advisory Commission Recommendation and vote on potential Emeline Exchange move. Commission recommends piloting a hybrid model maintaining exchange services at Emeline and Watsonville, while providing exchange services at outreach in collaboration with HPHP's Street Medicine. Commissioner Sturm recommends the 18-month hybrid model as this will allow time to get things moving and to collect data for a full year and allow communication to community partners and clients. Commission discuss recommending Board of Supervisors remove directive on providing services at fixed location and to move forward with pilot program for 18 months. Commission to consider recommending removal of Board of Supervisors directive on fixed hours to allow flexibility and ability to adjust to community need.

Motion to approve recommendations submitted by SSP staff as listed adding 18 months

Motion/Second: King/Sturm

Motion passed unanimously.

7.2 Monterey County Mobile Unit Visit: Commissioner King to share

7.3 The future of the Community Engagement Ad-Hoc Subcommittee

7.4 Discuss alternate site/locations for SSPAC meetings

Motion to move these items to March Meeting

Motion/Second: King/Sturm

Motion passed unanimously.

8. Topics for Future Meetings/Action Items:

9. Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 7:39PM

Submitted by Lucero Cosio-Santos (*Administrative Aide*)



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Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, April 11, 2023
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: 1400 Emeline Ave, Bldg. K, Rm 206
PRESENT: Damon Bruder (*3rd District*), Eric Sturm (*4th District*), Sarina King (*5th District*)
EXCUSED: Steve Plum (*1st District*)
ABSENT:
STAFF: Rahshan Williams (*Program Coordinator*), Socorro Gutierrez (*Health Services Manager*), Nicky Meza (*Administrative Aide*), Lucero Cosio-Santos (*Administrative Aide*) Laurel Gazza (*Administrative Aide*)
GUESTS:

1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions:
Meeting convened at 6:04 PM.
Chair Bruder Confirmed attendance.
2. Review and Corrections of the Agenda:
Correction made as number 4 was written twice.
3. Review and Approval of March 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes:
Motion to correct meeting minutes, review and correct at next meeting.
Motion/Second: Sturm/King
Motion passed unanimously.
4. Written Correspondence: none.
5. Oral Communications:
Laurel Gazza spoke about AB 2449 in which five bills are in development. Three within the State Assembly and two in the State Senate which could provide some flexibility in the future about remote attendance. Will monitor and see what develops with this.
6. Administration of Oaths of Office for existing members of the Syringe Services Advisory Committee:
6.1 Juliette Burke, Chief Deputy Clerk was present to administer the Oaths of office for the existing Commission members. Commission Chair Bruder, Commissioner Sturm, and

Commissioner King took the Oath of Office. For Commissioners not present, the Clerk of the Board will contact them directly to schedule the Oath of office.

7. Program Updates:

7.1 Rahshan Williams presented program updates. Program staff working diligently on the SSP Biennial Report to present to the Board of Supervisors on April 25, 2023. The City of Santa Cruz has approved installation of an additional syringe disposal kiosk on the Westside of the levee adjacent to the Kaiser Arena. Williams shared that a QR code sticker has been added to fentanyl test strips. This allows linkage to videos, education on use of strips and overdose prevention. Educational material on Xylazine has been added in the exchanges. Commissioner asking if there are kiosks in San Lorenzo Valley. Commissioner likes the QR code and commends the Sr. Health Educator for the idea.

8. Topics for Future Meetings/Action Items:

7.1 Monterey County Mobile Unit Visit: Commissioner King to share.

Commissioner King shared insight from her December 21, 2022, visit to the Access Support Network (ASN). Testing, treatment, and supplies are services offered at this mobile unit. Other community-based organizations came during the time the mobile unit was present, this allowed for community engagement and socializing.

Commissioner observed that the broader community was accepting of these services. Commissioners are interested in visiting ASN and Williams shared that another visit is getting planned.

7.2 Harm Reduction Coalition of Santa Cruz County (HRCSCC) Syringe Services Program Report. Chair Bruder asked this report to be added to the agenda for public record, the Board of Supervisors and for public health officials to view. HRSCCC is not affiliated with the SSP although they have the same goal, to provide harm reduction in the community. The report covers 8/8/2020-7//20/2021 a 12-month period. People served: 650; Syringes dispensed 796,060; dispensed per month; 66,338; Syringes collected 432,705; collected per month 36,058. Referrals to treatment programs; 27 individuals. Other referrals; 39.

Williams shared SSP report details for March 2023. Unique individuals seen: 69, Needles dispensed: 7039, Syringes collected: 8389, Syringes deposited in Kiosks: 55,337. Referrals: 69. The Commissioner wants to show numbers for comparison and expressed both programs are working towards Harm Reduction in our community.

7.3 The future of the Community Engagement Ad-Hoc Subcommittee

7.4 Discuss alternate site/locations for SSPAC meetings.

Motion to move items 7.3 and 7.4 to next meeting.

Motion/Second: King/Sturm

Motion passed unanimously.

9. Topics for Future Meetings/Action Items:

9.1 Update on the 4/25/23, SSP Biennial Report to the Board of Supervisors

9.2 Invite Joseph Crottogini from HPHP to June meeting

- 9.3 Invite Julia Anderson for survey results from South County efforts
- 9.4 Invite ASN staff member to share how the program started
- 9.5 Commission recruitment to fill vacancies
- 9.6 Recognition to Dr. Newel

10. Adjournment:

Motion to Adjourn the meeting.

Motion/Second: King/Sturm

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30PM

Submitted by Lucero Cosio-Santos (*Administrative Aide*)

Item 6: Attachment



The County of Santa Cruz
Syringe Services Program Commission

HEREBY PRESENTS THIS

Letter of Appreciation
TO
Dr. Gail Newel

IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS AND
SUCCESSSES TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF
ALL SANTA CRUZ COUNTY RESIDENTS

TUESDAY, MAY 9TH, 2023

DAMON BRUDER, CHAIR

ERIC STURM, VICE CHAIR



Santa Cruz County Syringe Services Program Advisory Commission

1060 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
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To: Dr. Gail Newel, Health Officer, County of Santa Cruz

From: Syringe Services Program Commission

Date: May 9th, 2023

RE: LETTER of APPRECIATION

The County of Santa Cruz, Syringe Services Program Commissioners would like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude for your meritorious service as County Health Officer for the past four years. Your dedication and commitment to public health have been nothing short of remarkable, and we want to personally thank you for all that you have done to improve the health and well-being of our community.

Your efforts to lead our county's COVID-19 response have been exemplary. From the early days of the pandemic, you were at the forefront of the fight, tirelessly working to keep our community safe and informed. Your leadership and expertise were critical in helping the community navigate this challenging time, and your guidance has undoubtedly saved countless lives.

In addition to your work on COVID-19, we want to recognize your efforts to help lift our Syringe Services Program. Your advocacy and support for this critical program have been instrumental in providing essential services to some of our most vulnerable community members. You have shown a deep understanding of the complex issues surrounding addiction, syringe exchange, community safety, and have worked tirelessly to ensure that those who need help are able to receive it.

Finally, we want to acknowledge your unwavering commitment to equitable health care access for our marginalized community members. You have been a champion for those who have traditionally been left behind by our health care system, and your efforts have helped to ensure that everyone in our community has access to the care they need, so they may lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

In all of these areas and many more, you have demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and compassion. Your work has made a profound impact on our community and will be felt for years to come. We are all so grateful for your service. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Syringe Services Program Commissioners:
Damon Bruder – Chairperson, Third District
Eric Sturm – Vice Chair, Fourth District
Sarina King – Commissioner, Fifth District
Steve Plumb – Commissioner, Second District

**8.1 Program Staff Update:
Report from 4/25 Board Meeting**

Health Services Agency Public Health Division



County of Santa Cruz Syringe Services Program (SSP) Advisory Commission Program Updates

Socorro Gutierrez
Health Services Manager

May 9, 2023



Board of Supervisors Update

On April 25, 2023, the Board of Supervisors

- 1) Accepted and filed the Health Services Agency's 2021-2022 Biennial Report for the Syringe Services Program; and
- 2) Adopted recommendations from the Syringes Services Program Advisory Commission to pilot a hybrid model that reduces exchange services at Emeline and Watsonville fixed-site locations, while providing exchange services at outreach in collaboration with Homeless Person Health Project's Street Medicine for a period of 18 months.

Additional Direction:

- Directed staff to return no later than March of 2024 the 18-month hybrid model pilot program including any resource adjustments requested and a status update on improperly discarded syringe litter, to continue working with other jurisdictions, County contractors and partners to continue collecting data on improperly discarded syringe litter, and continue to examine alternatives to siting a fixed North County program exclusively in the Emeline campus including opportunities to include SSP services and a broader community planning for Coral Street navigation services and other homeless programs.

Thank You





Syringe Service Program Access & Syringe Disposal Behaviors

High-Level Results from In-Depth Conversations with
Unhoused People Who Use Drugs in South County

About the Project



Between November 10th, 2022, and February 6th, 2023, the County of Santa Cruz's Syringe Services Program (SSP) staff and Community Health Promotors from the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County engaged people who were unhoused and using drugs in Watsonville in conversations about their knowledge of the SSP and their syringe use behaviors.

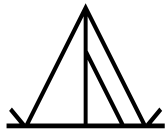
We targeted conversations with people who are unhoused and using drugs to evaluate and learn more about the populations':

- ✓ Knowledge of the SSP location, hours of operation, and services offered in Watsonville
- ✓ Syringe use and disposal attitudes and behaviors
- ✓ Barriers to SSP access and proper syringe disposal

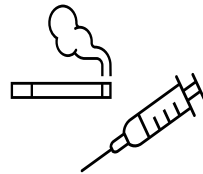
Demographics



40 unique individuals between the ages of 18 and 65



100%
report being
unhoused, either
living in tents along
the Parajo River
levee, in their cars,
or at Salvation
Army.

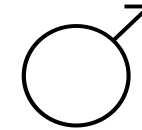


100%
either injects
and/or smokes
drugs such as
methamphetamine,
heroin, or fentanyl.

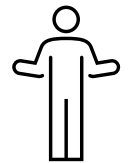


50%
bilingual in
Spanish and
English

35%
monolingual
Spanish
speakers



77.5%
identified
as male.



82.5%
report being
Hispanic/Latino

7.5%
report being
White

SSP Knowledge & Feedback



25 people (62.5%) were not familiar with the Watsonville SSP location and services.

- Of those not familiar, 72% were interested in going to the program after we told them more about it but said it's far away and not easy to access.

8 of the 15 people (37.5%) who know about the Watsonville SSP have visited.

- They reported having a positive experience during their visit, though 2 people said they were ashamed and embarrassed at first.

People provided suggestions on ways to improve SSP knowledge and access:

- More advertising and promoting to get the word out
- Provide help with transportation
- Find a downtown location that people can more easily walk to
- Meet people where they are to provide services
- Provide more locations to drop off used syringes

Community Engagement Knowledge & Feedback



34 people (85%) were aware of all three community engagement events.

- 5 were somewhat aware, knowing about one or two but not all three.
- Some people were unaware that they could ask harm reduction questions or get supplies – such as hygiene kits and wound care kits – at these events.

38 people (95%) said, yes, I've attended at least one engagement event.

- It seems that when people know about a community engagement event, it's likely they will attend. Community engagement events are a form of meeting people where they are, making it easier for those struggling with being unhoused to connect to health services and the community.

34 people (85%) reported that they found the events to be positive, saying they thought it was good, useful, enjoyable, and/or helpful at some point in the conversation.

Community Engagement Knowledge & Feedback



People provided suggestions on ways to improve the community engagement events:

- More promotion to get the word out!
 - Create and distribute informational flyers
 - Put up posters around town
 - Do social media messaging
 - Word-of-mouth from known and trusted messengers
- Provide information about how & where to dispose of used syringes
- More familiar clinic and healthcare staff present
- Continue to foster a sense of community with friendly staff


"Provide useful information to know exactly where to dispose of the syringes; having the kiosks to drop off the needles would be helpful if the kiosks were closer."

"It would be better if people could dispose of needles at the events. People would use that opportunity to dispose of needles."

Syringe Use & Disposal



Most people obtained clean syringes from the Harm Reduction Coalition of Santa Cruz County.

- 27 people - The Harm Reduction Coalition of Santa Cruz County
-  Some people said that when they miss meeting up with the Harm Reduction Coalition on Fridays, they'll reuse their old needles or pick up used needles off the ground to inject.
- 4 people - From friends
- 2 people - Buy them from the store
- 2 people - From the County clinic
- 1 person - From the Syringe Services Program

"If they [HRC of SCC] come and you miss them, then people are going to use dirty needles. People will pick used needles up off the ground."

Syringe Use & Disposal



18 people (45%) report disposing of used syringes in either approved biohazard containers or makeshift ones, such as a soda can, bottle, or bucket

- 3 people said they take their containers to the HRC of SCC
- 2 people said they take their containers to the SSP
- 1 person said they take theirs to the clinics that have disposal kiosks

13 people (32.5%) report disposing of used syringes on the ground or witnessing people tossing or leaving their syringes on the ground.

7 people (17.5%) report throwing their used syringes into garbage cans.

2 people (5%) said they take theirs to Salvation Army, which will collect used syringes in a Sharps container.

Syringe Use & Disposal



There are 7 established Sharps disposal kiosk locations in Watsonville.

Very few people we spoke to were familiar with these Sharps disposal kiosk locations!

- 7 people (17.5%) were able to identify only one of the syringe kiosk locations
- 20 people (20%) didn't know what we were talking about
- 13 people (32.5%) said they were familiar with kiosks at locations that do not actually have kiosks available, indicating that they are also unfamiliar with the kiosk locations.

Conclusions



Through continued and expanded partnerships, we have an opportunity to improve services to better reach people who are using drugs in Watsonville, including, but not limited to, initiatives such as:

- ✓ An SSP promotion campaign to increase awareness and knowledge
- ✓ A hybrid service delivery model in collaboration with community partners to meet people where they are and increase accessibility
- ✓ Education around proper syringe disposal practices and locations to safely dispose of used syringes
- ✓ Advocacy for the placement of additional Sharps disposal kiosks

Such efforts have important health and safety ramifications for people who are using drugs, people who are unhoused, and the community at large in terms of reducing the spread of infectious disease and reducing syringe litter waste.



Questions?