



# 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

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

## Notice of Public Meeting and Agenda

### In Person Meeting

1400 Emeline Ave., Bldg. K Room 206 & 207, Santa Cruz

**Date:** Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Time:** 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 261 943 330 14 Passcode: r8CtXe

**Or Call in (audio only):** United States, Salinas

Phone Conference: [+1 831-454-2222,206936621#](tel:+18314542222206936621) United States, Salinas

Phone Conference ID: 206 936 621#

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**Physical Location\*\*** 1400 Emeline Ave. Bldg. K Room 206 & 207  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

#### 1. Roll Call & Introductions

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Damon Bruder	Commission Chair, 3 <sup>rd</sup> District	
Sarina King	Commission Vice-Chair, 5 <sup>th</sup> District	
Eric Sturm	Commissioner, 4 <sup>th</sup> District	
Steve Plumb	Commissioner, 1 <sup>st</sup> District	
Evan deSieyes	Commissioner, 2 <sup>nd</sup> District	

#### 2. Review & Corrections of the Agenda

#### 3. Review & Approval of October 10th, Meeting 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. New Business/Action Items

6.1 Guest Speaker: Alejandro(Alex) Monroy, Mental Health Client Specialist

6.2 Update on acquiring SSP QR code through County account, with ability to retrieve data, how many people scan the QR code, where is it being scanned?

6.3 Follow up on QR code with data

6.4 Follow up on invitation to CDPH rep. guest speaker

#### 7. Program Updates

#### 8. Topics for Future Meetings

#### 9. Adjournment

Next Meeting to be held on January 9th, 2024, 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.*



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## Meeting Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
TIME: 6:00 PM  
LOCATION: 1430 Freedom Blvd Suite A(Atrium) Watsonville CA, 95076  
PRESENT:

Damon Bruder	Commission Chair, 3 <sup>rd</sup> District	Present
Sarina King	Commission Vice-Chair, 5 <sup>th</sup> District	Present
Eric Sturm	Commissioner, 4 <sup>th</sup> District	Present
Steve Plumb	Commissioner, 1 <sup>st</sup> District	Absent
Evan deSieyes	Commissioner, 2 <sup>nd</sup> District	Present

STAFF: Rahshan Williams (*Program Coordinator*), Socorro Gutierrez (*Health Services Manager*), Ivan Avalos (*Administrative Aide*)

- Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions:  
The meeting convened at 6:03 PM.  
Chair Bruder Confirmed attendance.  
Commissioner Steve Plumb was not present for this meeting.
- Review and Corrections of the Agenda: No corrections
- Review and Approval of September 12th, 2023, Meeting Minutes:

### **Motion to approve August 8, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

Motion/Second: Sturm/deSieyes

Aye: All

No: None

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- Written Correspondence: none
- Oral Communications:  
Our new Health Officer, Dr. Hernandez joined the meeting and introduced herself and talked a bit about her experience with SSP when it first started, Dr. Hernandez was also the Health office at that time. Chair Bruder acknowledged and thanked Lucero Cosio-Santos for her time as Clerk for the SSPAC Meetings.

6. New Business/Action Items:

6.1 Discussion on different venues to hold future SSPAC meetings. A rate sheet for venues rented by the City of Watsonville was shared with the group. Commissioners talked about pros & cons for different meeting places, indoors and outdoors, south and north county, cost to SSP. Outdoors spaces pose an IT challenge, unable to stream meeting virtually. Most indoor locations are not situated in an area not so accessible to the community SSP provides services to. Last year a meeting was held at the benchlands, only in person, not virtual. This makes the meeting less accessible to those who cannot physically attend for different reasons. Commissioners plan to have SSPAC meeting somewhere in Felton in May of 2024 and a meeting in Watsonville, Aptos or Santa Cruz in September of 2024.

6.2 Update on guest speakers for SSP Commission meetings. Rahshan to invite Guest Speaker, Alejandro(Alex) Monroy to present on links between MAT and SSP. Alex is a Mental Health Client Specialist at HSA Clinics. Commissioner Sturm to invite CDPH representative to talk about SSP around the state, trends, what can be learned.

6.3 Follow up on the recruitments for two at large vacancies. Commissioner Bruder suggests that we all invite folks in our own units/departments to become commissioners.

6.4 Update on SSP Website added button idea for open vacancies. Commissioner Sturm shared update, the request has been completed. There is now a button/link on SSP website to go directly and apply to become a commissioner

7. Program Updates. Rahshan presented on syringes distribution and collection, safe disposal and enhanced referrals and education. Data presented on number of visits by day, Watsonville Fixed and Mobile Sites. Success, we now have a QR code on every disposal box. Scan QR code to go directly to SSP webpage and access services, data reports, studies and harm reduction resources. Opportunities to engage, educate and learn. At Watsonville Rahshan brought cookies and shared with participants. He used cookies to explain harm reduction strategies when using Fentanyl test strips.

8. Topics future meetings

8.1 Rahshan to reach out to Kennedy regarding QR code through county code with ability to retrieve data, how many people scan the QR code, where is it being scanned?

- 8.1 Rahshan, to invite Mental Health Client Specialist Alejandro Monroy in place of Danny Contreras for next meeting to present on MAT program.
- 8.2 Commissioner deSieyes to invite local Surf Icon to meeting and talk a bit about his recovery program.
- 8.3 Research on syringe collection boxes in the area where SSP QR code can be posted, starting at Santa Cruz Metro, Rahshan Williams.
- 8.2 Commissioner King requested more data on Program Updates, who is seen, what services they are receiving, fentanyl test strip and other services.

## 9. Adjournment

### **Motion to Adjourn Meeting**

Motion/Second: King/Sturm

Aye: All

No: None

### **Motion passed unanimously**

Meeting adjourned at 7:05pm

Submitted by Ivan Avalos(Administrative Aide)



# Backlog of deaths weighs down Santa Cruz County coroner's unit

Jessica York

PUBLISHED: October 5, 2023 at 5:01 a.m. | UPDATED: October 5, 2023 at 9:41 a.m.

California News, Crime and Public Safety, Latest Headlines, News



*Members of a Santa Cruz County mobile health clinic conduct street outreach on Coral Street in Santa Cruz. (Jessica A. York — Santa Cruz Sentinel)*

SANTA CRUZ — As countywide efforts to increase the availability of overdose remedies ramp up, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Coroner's Unit has been weighed down by a growing backlog of deaths, many related to drug overdoses.

The coroner's unit saw a 3,150% increase in fentanyl overdose-related deaths in a four-year period, a startling statistic reported to the Santa Cruz County Board of

Supervisors on Tuesday when the Sheriff's Office came seeking authorization to hire a new coroner's investigator to assist the chief forensic pathologist.

"The fentanyl crisis, we read about it day in and day out and it's hit home," Supervisor Bruce McPherson said before voting with the board to approve the new hire as a consent agenda item. "This is a catastrophe and we need to address it as quickly as we can, with the cooperative effort through every law enforcement agency that we have."

Amid the growth of opioid overdose-related deaths is a "disquieting" leap in those involving fentanyl, in particular, according to the Sheriff's Office report. Santa Cruz County experienced 53 fentanyl overdose-related deaths this year through June, a steep upward climb from just two deaths in 2018 and 65 for all of 2022.

Supervisor Manu Koenig described the rising fatal fentanyl overdose trend as "extremely concerning," adding that he hoped to see continued efforts to address the issue through early education at area high schools and with parents speaking to their children about the dangers. McPherson suggested the public assist law enforcement investigations by notifying them of drug-related activities.

The Sheriff's Office has named opioid access and overdose deaths as a top priority, according to the agency's report to the Board of Supervisors. The office "continues to collaborate with drug enforcement partners and community drug-prevention advocates to reverse the drug-use and death trends occurring in Santa Cruz County." The Sheriff's Office Special Enforcement Team seized 3,282 grams of fentanyl from July 2022 to June 2023, as one of its measures.





*As opioid overdoses have skyrocketed, affecting the Santa Cruz County Coroner's Unit, countywide efforts to address the drug epidemic continue. (Jessica A. York — Santa Cruz Sentinel)*

Ad

Nowhere are the signs of drug use more visible and concentrated than in areas of street homeless encampments spread across the county. The region is on track to end 2023 with a homeless mortality increase estimated to be 40% higher than 2022, according to David Davis, an administrative analyst for the Santa Cruz County Homeless Persons Health Project. As of Aug. 31, Davis had gathered information on 89 deaths, 11 from confirmed fatal overdoses. Of the remaining deaths, more than 40 remained pending toxicology reports for the cause of death, Davis said. For comparison, in 2022, Davis recorded 91 deaths of people experiencing homelessness.

The drug epidemic has ushered in new street health partnerships and teams in recent years, such as Homeless Persons Health Project nurses working in collaboration with Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency and Syringe Services Program personnel. In August, the agencies formed a new mobile clinic to focus on addressing opioid use disorder, accidental overdose prevention, medication-assisted treatment, wound care, psychiatric consultations and a pilot mobile syringe services

offering, according to HPHP Health Services Manager Joey Crottogini. Other services include care such as rapid HIV/hepatitis C virus testing and treatment, COVID-19 vaccines and benefits advocacy.

## Related Articles

- [Crime and Public Safety](#)  
[Man involved in confrontation with Jewish protester who died called 911, cooperated with Southern California police](#)
- [Crime and Public Safety](#)  
[Police: Thieves steal \\$70,000 of Bay Area business's wares in a week](#)
- [Crime and Public Safety](#)  
[Bay Area homeowner kills suspected intruder, police say](#)
- [Crime and Public Safety](#)  
[Why Israeli consulate invited Bay Area journalists to witness new harrowing footage of Hamas attacks](#)
- [Crime and Public Safety](#)  
[Baby dies from fentanyl exposure; Fremont mother arrested](#)

“Part of the reason I think that doing SSP (syringe services program) mobile is extremely important is one, it’s basic patient-centered care,” Crottogini said. “You meet people where they’re at. You’re more likely to engage them into services.”

Toting a pull-cart down Coral Street stacked with supplies last week, the street team had conversations with nearly two dozen people in less than an hour. For many, the team was able to offer brown grocery bag “mobile care packages” with everything



Public Health

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

November 14, 2023

## **Current Activities**

1) Distribution and Collection

2) Enhanced Referrals and Education

## Wound care and Hygiene supplies

- **10 of 341** participants at mobile exchange sites accessed non-“drug use” supplies e.g., Fentanyl Test Strips, Narcan, Smoking kits or Syringes
- Participant surveys for feedback on wound care and hygiene kit contents
- Supply kit production/construction

## Mobile Exchange Syringe Distribution and Collection

- Syringes **collected** at Mobile Exchange sites through end of October = **768**
- Syringe **dispensed** at Mobile Exchange sites through end of October = **118**
- Persons who inject drugs often do not have them at point of exchange
- We are continuing to distribution of sharps containers and maintaining readiness for and increase in **syringe exchange** at mobile sites

## Mobile Exchange Smoking Kit Distribution

- **341** exclusive mobile exchange participants (**have not accessed our fixed sites**)
- **315** of those participants accessed pipes and not syringes (92%)
- We are limiting distribution of smoking kits to one of each variety at mobile exchange



# Smoking vs. Injection as Harm Reduction

## [Information in our Smoking Kit Brochures](#)

- Injecting less frequently is associated with **lower risk of bloodborne pathogen transmission**
- Risk of **overdose is far less likely** when smoking vs. injecting
- Injecting less frequently is associated with **fewer skin and soft tissue infections**
- Some of the harms of injection drug use, like endocarditis, are injection-specific
- **Reduces community syringe litter**

[For more current information on the study of on safer smoking practices](#)



## Enhanced Referrals and Education

- We are continuing our close collaboration with the County MAT team and Street Medicine to Facilitate
- We are continuing to work to hire our SSU SUD navigators for and have top candidates selected

# Thank You

