



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
MANAGER'S REPORT

DATE ISSUED: November 17, 2000

REPORT NO. 00-264

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council

SUBJECT: Clean Syringe Exchange Program Task Force

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

On October 16, 2000, the City Council approved declaring a state of local emergency in connection with the spread of the Hepatitis C virus, exacerbated by the shared use of needles and syringes by intravenous drug users and directed the City Manager to develop and implement a one-year clean needle and syringe exchange pilot program, coupled with a drug abuse treatment program, within the City. In addition, the City Manager was directed to immediately convene a task force charged with developing the practices and procedures to be used in the clean needle and syringe exchange pilot program. At the meeting, the City Manager stated that the County and other cities in the region would be asked whether or not they would be interested in participating in the development of the program.

DISCUSSION

In developing a representative task force related to this issue, several members of the public health community were consulted. In addition to City staff representatives, six individuals who have several years of involvement in closely related issues and who bring their individual and relevant expertise on this issue have agreed to serve on the Clean Syringe Exchange Program Task Force. Following is the full list of Task Force members:

- Christopher Mathews, M.D.(Chair) UCSD Owen Clinic
- Michael Franz McAlister Institute
- Bill Harris Mayor's Office
- Bruce Herring City Manager's Office
- Phyllis Jackson Harm Reduction Study Group
- Linda Lloyd, Ph.D. Alliance Healthcare Foundation
- Theresa McAteer City Attorney's Office
- Captain Larry Moratto Police Department
- Gary Stephany Healthcare Association
- Ian Trowbridge, Ph.D. Salk Institute/UCSD

It is anticipated that a representative from the Community Planners Committee will also participate on the Task Force.

As directed by the City Council, the mission of the Clean Syringe Exchange Task Force is to develop a one-year clean syringe exchange pilot program, coupled with a drug abuse treatment program. The first meeting of the Task Force was held on Wednesday, November 15, 2000. At this meeting, the Task Force discussed many critical issues that need to be researched and evaluated related to the development and implementation of this type of program.

Because the Task Force has had only one meeting, it is too soon at this time to state how long this process is estimated to take. Once a thorough evaluation of all of the pertinent issues has been completed, a status report regarding the progress of the Task Force and a project timeline will be provided to the City Council. This is anticipated to occur within 90 days. It is anticipated that soon thereafter, the Task Force will forward their recommendations regarding a Clean Syringe Exchange Pilot Program implementation model to the City Council for their consideration.

On October 30, 2000, letters were sent to the County of San Diego, as well as 16 cities within the region to solicit their interest in participating in the development and implementation of this program. Since this critical issue is one that faces all cities within San Diego County, it is recognized that the involvement of the County and the other cities would help to enhance the likelihood of the program's success. To date, the City has not received responses from either the County or any of the cities within the region in regard to their interest in participating in this process.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce A. Herring
Deputy City Manager

MCW