



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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News Release

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Immediate Release

“New Points” Dickinson-Iron Syringe Service Program to begin at Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan – September 1, 2020. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department (DIDHD) is now offering a Syringe Service Program (SSP) called New Points. This service is being offered in Dickinson County with expansion in Iron County in near future. Funding from this program is provided by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and NorthCare Network. The purpose of an SSP is to reduce risk both for the clients using substances and the community as a whole; while helping clients move towards treatment and recovery.

SSP's are community-based programs that provide access to sterile syringes, needles and other clean paraphernalia for individuals injecting street drugs. This prevents sharing of used equipment and decreases the transmission of infectious disease. New Points will also offer safe disposal of used needles and syringes. New Points will provide a range of health services and offer harm reduction to those struggling with a substance use disorder. Participants will be offered vaccinations and testing opportunities for diseases such as HIV, hepatitis C, and sexually transmitted diseases. Education about safer choices and referrals to medical, mental health, and recovery services will be provided.

The opiate crisis is fueling a dramatic increase in infectious disease. Research by the Center of Disease Control (CDC) indicates most of the increase is the result of people sharing needles to inject heroin and other drugs. In 2019, 60% of the newly reported Hepatitis C cases in Dickinson and Iron Counties reported intravenous drug use. The CDC reports that access to comprehensive SSP's are a key strategy in reducing the spread of disease.

Daren Deyaert, Health Officer for DIDHD, indicated “DIDHD offers many of the services provided by a comprehensive SSP, therefore making it a beneficial program under the Public Health umbrella. If a participant is in need of another service offered by the Health Department, a connection to this program will be made. It is an easy transition for the coordination of care.”

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What SSP's DO:

- Reduce drug use by succeeding in getting more people to enter into drug treatment and to stop injecting drugs.
- Reduce drug overdose deaths.
- Reduce needlestick injuries among local law enforcement officers.
- Reduce new HIV and hepatitis infections.
- Save on healthcare costs by preventing disease.

What SSP's DO NOT DO:

- Increase crime.
- Increase IV drug use.

Kelly Rumpf, Health Educator and Project Coordinator for New Points stated "intravenous drug use is not a stand-alone issue for those who have substance use disorders. IV drug use often brings difficulties with housing, disease, finances, and mental health issues which have an effect on health outcomes. The Health Department is looking forward to offering participants resources needed to improve their quality of life."

For more information, please contact Rumpf at (906) 779-7234 or krumpf@didhd.org.

Program Hours (walk-in services)

Dickinson-Iron District Health Dept.
818 Pyle Drive
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START DATE: Monday, September 14, 2020
Mondays 12:30pm – 3pm

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