

# SB 60: Drug Paraphernalia Amendments

Senate Sponsor: Dr. Jen Plumb    House Sponsor: Steve Eliason

The opioid crisis has been a serious threat to public health and safety. Finding strategies to decrease the impact on our communities is crucial. Decreasing syringe litter in our communities, decreasing needle stick risks to our law enforcement and first responders, and connecting people to treatment spaces are goals of this bill. This bill seeks to promote collaborative relationships between public health, public safety, and criminal justice to reduce healthcare costs, promote responsible healthy behavior, and decrease law enforcement burdens.

Decreases healthcare costs related to blood borne infections (cost per case);

- Hepatitis C (\$100,000)
- Endocarditis (\$200,000+ per infection)
- HIV (millions over a lifetime)
- Soft tissue infection
- Creates consistency between state public health programming and policy

#### Public Safety Benefits:

- Decreases burden to Law Enforcement agencies for storage of biohazardous material/evidence.
- Decreases the potential for law enforcement injuries and needle sticks.
- Decreases potential for interactions escalating to violence.

- One study reports 66% reduction in needle stick injuries to officers with decreased syringe paraphernalia penalties.
- This shift will increase safety for public health and potentially form better relationships between the public and law enforcement.

#### Systems Benefits:

- Decrease in Class B Misdemeanor charges which decreases burden on law enforcement and prosecution agencies.
- Decrease syringe litter and potential associated risks in our communities. Encourages safe and responsible disposal of syringes.

#### Individual Benefits:

- Decreases barriers to accessing syringe exchange programs, resulting in increased probability of saving a life and engagement in treatment.
- Creates a touchpoint and connection to treatment services when individuals become engaged in the criminal justice system.

- This will support participants in learning to safely dispose syringes resulting in less hazardous community litter (\$0.07 per syringe).
- Allows for better relationships and information sharing between public health and public safety.