

Partner Counseling and Referral Service (PCRS)

PCRS is a free, confidential and completely voluntary service that helps people who are HIV+ to talk to their partners (current or past) who may have been exposed to HIV.

A specially trained counselor helps clients explore ways to tell their partners (sex and/or needle sharing) about their possible exposure to HIV so that their partners can make informed decisions about their health or about getting tested for HIV. The counselor provides sensitive and private support, answers any questions, addresses concerns and explores options with clients to tell their partners about possible exposure.

Clients can choose to talk to their partners using one, or a combination, of the following options:

Self Disclosure - Clients choose to talk to their partners by themselves after receiving help from a counselor.

Dual Disclosure - Clients choose to talk to their partners together with a counselor.

Anonymous Disclosure - Clients choose to have a representative of the Alameda County Public Health Department tell their partners without revealing their name or any personal identifying information.

For more information about this service, please call (510) 268-7630.

Harm Reduction Services

-- Needle Exchange Programs

In December 1999, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors declared a State of Emergency regarding the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis B & C through shared needles. They did this to protect the health of the residents of Alameda County. The Declaration provides public agencies, such as the Alameda County Public Health Department and their agents and employees who distribute syringes, as part of needle exchange programs, freedom from criminal prosecution under California State law.

The Alameda County Public Health Department has implemented this commitment by funding needle exchange programs with various harm reduction services, such as wound care clinic, in both North and South County. To access these services in North and South County, please call the HIV Education and Prevention Project of Alameda County (HEPPAC) at (510) 437-8899 or Tri-City Health Center at (510) 713-6690 for specific information.

In **Berkeley**, the Needle Exchange Emergency Distribution (NEED) operates three needle exchange programs on a weekly basis. For more information, contact (510) 678-8563 or visit www.berkeleyneed.org/

The three sites are as follows:

Tuesday: 4-6 pm at Long Haul Infoshop, 3124 Shattuck Ave./Woolsey St. (2 blocks east of Ashby Ave.)

Thursday: 6-8 pm at Hearst Street & San Pablo Ave. (1 block north of University Ave.)

Sunday: 6-8 pm at 2340 Durant Ave/Dana (1 block west of Telegraph), across the street from the Berkeley Free Clinic

- Please check for which day and place that each of the following services is provided:
 - * Overdose prevention training
 - * Wound care clinic
 - * Hepatitis testing & vaccinations
 - * Bread/pastries usually available
 - * Produce, sandwiches and juice available
 - * Oral HIV testing in a van across the street, operated by the City of Berkeley

In **Contra Costa County**, one-for-one needle exchange programs operate on a weekly basis, from 6:00-8:00 pm., at the following four sites:

Monday: Central Richmond: 500 B Street

Wednesday: North Richmond: 1090 Factory Street

Tuesday: Bay Point: 2586 Willow Pass Road

Thursday: Pittsburg: 389 Central Avenue

Contact Community Health Empowerment at (510) 236-8122 for more information.

--Pharmacy Sales Program

On January 1, 2005, California Senate Bill (SB) 1159 went into effect. This legislation allows for the creation of a Disease Prevention Demonstration Project (DPDP) in cities and counties that authorize such a program. The DPDP establishes collaboration among pharmacies and local and state health officials to evaluate the long-term feasibility of allowing licensed pharmacists to provide or sell nonprescription hypodermic needles or syringes to prevent the spread of blood-borne pathogens, including HIV and Hepatitis C. This provision of the law expires on December 31, 2010.

Under SB 1159:

- A licensed pharmacist can sell or furnish 10 or fewer hypodermic needles or syringes at any one time to a person 18 years of age or older without a prescription providing the pharmacist works for a pharmacy registered in the local Public Health Department's DPDP.
- A pharmacist must certify that written information or verbal counseling will be provided at the time of purchase on how to access drug treatment, access testing and treatment for HIV and Hepatitis C and how to safely dispose of and store needles/syringes (known as sharps).
- The local Public Health Department must maintain a list of all pharmacies that have registered under the DPDP and provide them written information that will be given to customers when non-prescription hypodermic needles or syringes are furnished or sold.

A number of pharmacies are registered to sell a limited number of syringes without a prescription under the DPDP. No consumer ID is necessary. All Walgreens, Longs and Rite Aid pharmacies in Alameda and Contra Costa counties are registered. Individual pharmacies may opt out and only offer referrals.

Pharmacists wanting more information about the DPDP and consumers who want a list of actively participating pharmacies should contact the Alameda County Public Health Department, Office of AIDS Administration, (510) 268-7630, or the Contra Costa County AIDS Program at (925) 313-6771.

— Medical Marijuana Identification Card Program

On July 18, 2005, the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) resumed implementation of the Medical Marijuana Program (MMP) and the issuance of identification cards to qualified patients and their designated primary caregivers.

The Medical Marijuana Identification Card Program provides patients an ID card that could be used as evidence that they had received a recommendation from their physician to use marijuana for medicinal purposes. The card can assist law enforcement officials in determining whether an individual using marijuana meets the requirements of the *California Compassionate Use Act* which states that a patient may obtain and use marijuana for personal medical purposes with the recommendation of a physician.

For more information, contact your primary physician or visit the CDHS website at www.dhs.ca.gov/mmp/ or the Alameda County Public Health Dept. website at www.acphd.org.

Alternative and Complementary Health Care

Alternative medicine has been described as "any of various systems of healing or treating disease, such as [chiropractic](#), [homeopathy](#), or [faith healing](#), that are not included in the traditional [medical](#) curricula taught in the United States and Britain".

Alternative medicine practices are often based in a belief systems not derived from modern science. Alternative medicine may therefore incorporate spiritual, metaphysical, or religious underpinnings, untested practices, non-Western medical traditions, or newly developed approaches to healing.

If an alternative medical approach, initially regarded as untested, is subsequently shown to be safe and effective, it may then be adopted as "complimentary" by conventional practitioners and no longer be considered "alternative".

For more information about these kinds of services, please see the Alternative Health service category index in the table of contents.