



## Harm Reduction Syringe Exchange Program



**Policy C-IC-9**

**September 9, 2015  
Revised June 13, 2019**

**Purpose:** To describe and establish guidelines for the Harm Reduction Syringe Exchange Program (HRSEP) operated by Three Rivers District Health Department (TRDHD)

**Policy:** TRDHD will operate a HRSEP within the Community Health division. The program's mission is to reduce the spread of communicable disease such as HIV and HCV among persons who inject drugs by providing a public health service that adopts and utilizes the best practices established for harm reduction in this population.

**Procedure:** Boards and/or applicable governing bodies shall approve by majority vote the operation of a HRSEP in accordance with SB192, KRS 218A.500.

- I. The HRSEP will be executed according to the attached recommended processes and procedures as incorporated by Form C-IC-9 Recommended HRSEP Procedures, which may be amended and/or modified by the local board of health as needed to meet the needs of the local community.

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**District Director**

**Date**

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**Chairperson, Three Rivers District Board of Health**

**Date**

## FORM C-IC-9 (A)

### HRSEP Procedures

**TARGET POPULATIONS:** The HRSEP will provide services to a person who injects drugs and requests services offered by the TRDHD HRSEP program.

**INITIAL VISIT (Intake of New Participants):** Access to these services is voluntary and at the participant's request. HRSEP services will be provided anonymously. A unique identifier will be created at initial visit and used each time they return for HRSEP services for data collection. All HRSEP participant visits and services provided will be housed on a database secured by a Three Rivers (Information Technology (IT) firewall. Participants' rights and responsibilities will be reviewed with each participant at the time of program enrollment. Participants will be asked to complete an anonymous intake form that collects baseline data that will be used for program evaluation.

At the initial visit, HRSEP staff will recommend the client set an appointment with the TRDHD health center for assessment and education of other services that might be available to the participant. These services will be provided confidentially. Identifying demographic information and consent will be necessary. Confidential health department services will be documented in a medical record separate from the HRSEP records.

**SUPPLY VISITS:** Supply visits occur after the initial visit and will be comprised of:

- Referral for follow-up clinical services
- Discussion about treatment options
- Collection of used syringes
- Distribution of clean injection equipment
- Distribution of Naloxone when needed & available

**EXISTING PARTICIPANTS:** The participant's unique ID (~~assigned at the initial visit~~) will be used to locate their record in the database. The database will be updated with the services provided on each return visit. HRSEP staff will continue to foster the relationship with participants based on trust and encourage participants to take responsibility for their own harm reduction behavior.

**HRSEP SERVICES:** The HRSEP will provide clean injection equipment, risk reduction, and proper syringe disposal. Participants will be instructed to return their used syringes and this language will be included in the Participant Rights and Responsibilities. The program's community outreach and promotional materials will emphasize that this is an exchange program and participants are expected to bring used equipment to the health center in exchange for sterile equipment. In accordance with harm reduction best practices, however, if someone comes to the program without equipment, they will be provided services and equipment and instructed to return the provided equipment at their next visit for exchange.

**REFERRALS TO CLINICAL NURSING STAFF:** Any consultation will include education and recommended screenings for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV, sexually transmitted

diseases, pregnancy, wound care and/or referral for wound care. Condoms and safe sex information will also be available.

**SYRINGE DISTRIBUTION:** Syringes will be exchanged with participants by assessing his or her usage and keeping in mind the public health consequences of reusing and sharing syringes. The number of syringes to be exchanged will be determined based on the participant's estimated usage – the frequency of injection and the length of time until she/he can next access the HRSEP so as to avoid sharing of equipment and transmitting disease. A maximum of forty (40) syringes/clean injection equipment can be given at a visit.

All used injection supplies collected by the HRSEP will be disposed of according to existing work practices in place at the TRDHD. Exchange of used equipment is expected at each visit. If a participant does not bring back used equipment for three consecutive visits no new supplies will be given. The nurse will assess the reasons for no exchange and document this in the database. Discussion of the rights and responsibilities will be stressed. New supplies will be given once used equipment is brought in.

**LOCATION:** The goal is to have the HRSEP operate at each of our four health centers upon approval of the respective city and county governments. Off-site services may be provided if resources are available and to meet the needs of the community.

**HOURS OF OPERATION:** HRSEP hours of operation will vary by location with staggered times of operation depending on need. Specific hours of operation will be publicized in the program promotional material, and posted along with other TRDHD services.

**STAFFING:** On days of operation, the HRSEP will be staffed by two HRSEP trained employees.

**STAFF EDUCATION:** Initially, staff will be provided a four (4) day training program from the Harm Reduction Coalition. This course is a train the trainer model that can be used for ongoing training for new staff. Prior to opening any HRSEP programs within Three Rivers' district, a minimum of two staff will be trained at that location.

Staff will also be trained in overdose prevention & Naloxone/Narcan administration, syringe safety and proper disposal, as well as all operational policies of the HRSEP.

HRSEP Staff Members participating in the HRSEP will dress appropriately to prevent the transmission of disease. (Recommendations include pants, long sleeves or lab coat, closed toe shoes, as well as the availability of needle-stick resistant gloves).

Annually, staff will be required to review all HRSEP operational policies as well as receive updates on behavioral health, medical, and substance abuse treatment resources.

**REFERRALS:**

1. **Addiction Treatment** - The staff will be knowledgeable regarding all community treatment resources (such as methadone, buprenorphine/Suboxone and

naltrexone/Vivitrol), detoxification, residential and outpatient treatment, recovery centers and 12 step groups).

2. **Reportable disease** - Any reportable disease shall be reported according to applicable law and referrals for treatment provided.
3. **Pregnancy** - If a participant has a positive pregnancy test, they will be counseled and referred for prenatal care and addiction treatment following the Kentucky Department for Public Health protocol.
4. **Mental Health Referral** - Upon assessment of mental health needs, a referral will be made to community resources, if ~~required~~ requested.
5. **Other** - HRSEP staff will link participants to primary care providers in the community for other health-related concerns, or the emergency room, if requested.

**OVERDOSE TREATMENT:** Naloxone/Narcan, a medication that is used to prevent death from opiate overdose, will be kept on site and staff will be trained to administer ~~it~~ should it be necessary.

**NALOXONE/NARCAN EDUCATION & DISTRIBUTION:** Overdose education will be provided by TRDHD HRSEP staff. Training will include signs of overdose & how to respond.

Naloxone/Narcan is currently being provided from the Kentucky Department for Public Health and distributed by trained TRDHD HRSEP staff. Participants and/or family members will be offered a Naloxone/Narcan kit, if available, and if they submit to the required education and training. The participants identifier will be placed on kits and distribution noted in participant chart. TRDHD will keep a distribution record/log that includes patient identifier and the initials of the person who received a Naloxone kit.

**INSURANCE ENROLLMENT:** HRSEP staff will encourage uninsured participant to enroll in coverage through ~~Kynect~~ insurance benefit exchange. Participants will be referred to the county certified ~~Kynector~~ representative.

**FEES:** Most services provided through the HRSEP will be provided to participants free of charge. Services requiring identifying information will be provided to participant upon their consent and may be billed per the regular sliding scale fee or to a third-party payor if participant is enrolled. No participant will be turned away for an inability to pay.

**EVALUATION:** All participants will be asked to complete a baseline survey to provide ~~us with~~ demographic information, history of use, and interest in services. Participation will be documented and entered into the participant database to track use of the program.

Community Health Staff will evaluate the program's effectiveness and impact at regular intervals and report results on a regular basis to the District Director of Health. Evaluation of the HRSEP will include:

- Number of unduplicated participants with demographics such as age, zip code of residence and gender
- Frequency of intravenous injection
- Total number of visits to the HRSEP

- Estimated number of needles brought to the exchange for proper disposal
- Number of needles issued to participants
- Number of vaccines provided
- Number of tests for HIV and Hepatitis C
- Number of referrals for STIs and pregnancy
- Number of positive tests for syphilis, HIV, Hepatitis C and pregnancy
- Number of participants referred to addiction treatment
- Number of participants enrolled in health insurance coverage through insurance exchange
- Number of police runs to the health center for addressing issues related to individuals' injection drug use
- Number of EMS runs to the health center for addressing issues related to individuals' injection drug use

**PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK:** Feedback is an important element of quality participant services. TRDHD will survey program participants quarterly to gather feedback and suggestions. Participants will be able to provide feedback through the existing established procedure for handing feedback in the health center.