



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

July 24, 2018

Lance Himes
Director of Health
Ohio Department of Health
246 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Mr. Himes,

The Ohio Department of Health submitted a determination of need request to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with data examining whether the state is experiencing or at risk for an increase in viral hepatitis or HIV infection due to injection drug use. Consulting with CDC to determine need is a requirement in the process of seeking approval to use federal funds to support syringe services programs (SSPs). All such requests are reviewed by a panel of CDC subject matter experts who evaluate submitted data in accordance with the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Implementation Guidance to Support Certain Components of Syringe Services Programs, 2016*.

Based on the data presented, CDC concurs with the Ohio Department of Health (ODOH) that there is a statewide need for SSPs. ODOH provided compelling evidence of year-to-year increases in HIV infections attributed to injection drug use (IDU) in the state of Ohio. While overall, Ohio saw a modest increase from 2015-2017 in rate of HIV diagnoses of 7.4%, the proportion of these infections attributed to IDU increased 78% from 6.7% in 2015 to 11.9% in 2017, and the absolute number of diagnosed HIV infections attributed to IDU increased 92%. A parallel increase in diagnoses of hepatitis C infections was also reported: 139% from 2013 to 2016. The data submitted by ODOH also demonstrate an increasing demand for services at the state's only syringe services program where the number of clients increased 70% over a two-year period: from 2,425 in 2013 to 4,114 in 2015. The ODOH provided additional compelling evidence that problematic drug use (i.e., deaths, overdoses), including the use of drugs such as heroin and fentanyl that are primarily injected, is on the rise. These data when considered together demonstrate that Ohio is experiencing an increase in HIV and viral hepatitis and is at risk for further significant increases in viral hepatitis infections or an HIV infection outbreak due to injection drug use.

This notice may be used by state, local, territorial, or tribal health departments or eligible HHS-funded recipients to apply to direct federal funds to support SSPs. As there is no expiration date for this notice, Ohio may elect to either (1) immediately request to direct current federal funding to support SSPs or (2) delay requests to direct funds to support SSPs until a subsequent fiscal year. The State is strongly encouraged to discuss plans to direct funds for SSPs with your federal funding agencies. Only CDC directly funded, eligible awardees should submit a request to CDC for direct funding for SSP activities.

Thank you for your interest in the public health implications of injection drug use in Ohio. If you have any questions or require further technical assistance, please do not hesitate to send an email to SSPCoordinator@cdc.gov.

Sincerely,
CDC SSP Determination Panel