

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE YOUTH ACTIVITIES SOCIETY (DEYAS)

NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

**221 Main Street
Vancouver BC V6A 2S7
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The DEYAS Needle Exchange Program operates to exchange new needles for used ones and to provide condoms for the purpose of preventing the transmission of HIV and other infections among Vancouver residents, with a particular focus on intravenous drug users and sex trade workers. The Exchange also provides bleach, alcohol wipes and clean water bottles, information on AIDS/HIV, hepatitis, endocarditis, TB, and other health issues, as well as referrals to other community resources such as alcohol and drug counsellors and AIDS-related programs.

The services of the Exchange are equally relevant to those not HIV infected and to those who have tested HIV antibody positive. Using clean syringes and/or condoms not only prevents the transmission of HIV and hepatitis, it also prevents the transmission of other infections to people already living with AIDS or HIV infection.

The Exchange operates on a 24 hour basis. There is a fixed site at 221 Main Street which is open from 8:30am to 8pm daily. Mobile outreach is done by vans seven days a week from 5:30pm to 8:30am the following morning. Bulk trades are done at the fixed site only, with limited exceptions from the vans.

The DEYAS Needle Exchange has a policy of limiting client trading of syringes, which is designed to accomplish three specific goals: to maximize access to clean syringes, bleach, condoms, etc. for IV drug users; to educate users on the proper use of equipment to prevent the transmission of HIV and other infections; and to recover contaminated needles as quickly and completely as possible to prevent their possible re-use. In practice, daily trading limits serve to maximize interaction between Exchange workers and clients without particularly restricting client access to needles, increasing the potential for client education and boosting the recovery rate of used syringes, which are then disposed of as medical waste. Exchange limits at the fixed site are 14 per day, three times per week - a total of 42 per week. Any person with a health condition, such as HIV or hepatitis, may trade double the weekly limit. Further, clients may trade up to five needles at the Exchange van at each van stop.

The underlying philosophy of the Exchange - optimizing access to clients - serves to keep people coming back on a regular basis, helping workers to keep in close touch and build strong trust levels with clients. As a result, frontline workers are frequently the first line of approach for people want drug counselling, detox referral or health information.

Clients must trade point for point. Normally, the Exchange will provide only one needle to a client who does not have one to exchange. First time clients must show track marks to prove they are users. The Exchange will not allow people to trade for friends; clients must do their own trading.

The DEYAS Exchange operates on a computerized data base at the fixed site which allows tracking clients and trades on a weekly basis and doing analysis on an ongoing basis. Clients are recorded in a non-identifying manner by number, with 3 initials and a birth date for corroboration. The initials and birth date are chosen by the client and need not be their own. Van trades are not tracked by number (with the exception of bulk trades), as the vans are too busy to make that a viable option.

The exchange rate for syringes varies slightly from month to month, but consistently averages over 100%. During 1994, the Exchange gave out a total of 1,157,520 syringes and got back 1,187,367 for an exchange rate of 102.6%. During 1994, the Exchange also gave out 635,000 condoms, 880,200 alcohol swabs, 200,200 vitamin pills, and 40,100 packages of lubrication, as well as bleach and water bottles.

DEYAS NEEDLE EXCHANGE:

EAST VAN HOURS

MONDAY 5:30pm-12 midnight
TUESDAY TO SUNDAY 5:30pm-1:30am

5:30 - 7 Driving: Cordova, Dundas, Semlin, PNE, Hastings, Commercial, Kettle, Broadway, Clark
 7:00 Vernon & Hastings
 7:15-7:45 Hawks, East Hastings
 7:45 449 East Hastings, WISH
 8 - 9 100 Block East Hastings
 9 - 10 Driving: Portland Hotel, Cordova, Dundas, PNE, Hastings
 10-10:20 Hastings & Semlin
 10:20-11:00 Driving: Franklin Strip, Vernon, Hastings
 11:00-11:30 100 Block East Hastings
 11:30 Portland Hotel
 11:45 Main at Georgia-old bank building
 12-1:30 Driving: Quebec, Broadway, Commercial, Clark, Dundas, Templeton, PNE, Hastings, Semlin, Franklin Strip, Vernon, Hastings

NOTE:
 12:30-1:30 Other van at 100 block E.Hastings

VAN TRADES: 5 needles, point for point
BULK TRADES AT OFFICE: 14 day/42 week

OFFICE: 221 MAIN STREET, 685-6561

HOURS: 8:30am to 8pm every day

DEYAS NEEDLE EXCHANGE:

WEST VAN HOURS

DAILY: 5:00pm-12 midnight

5:00-5:30 St. Paul's Hospital (Thurlow side)
 5:30-6:00 Driving: Davie, Bate, Jervis, Robson, Denman, Davie
 6:00-7:00 1000 block Granville
 7:00-8:00 Driving: Boystown, Mount Pleasant, Kingsway, Davie, Denman
 8:00-8:30 Robson & Denman
 9:00-11:00 Driving: Boystown, Kingsway, Joyce, Kootenay Loop (9:45), Boundary, Broadway, Quebec, Davie, Denman, Robson, Richards
 11:00-11:30 1000 block Granville
 11:30 Boystown

VAN TRADES: 5 needles, point for point
BULK TRADES AT OFFICE: 14 day/42 week

OFFICE: 221 MAIN STREET, 685-6561

HOURS: 8:30am to 8pm every day

DEYAS NEEDLE EXCHANGE:

OVERNIGHT VAN HOURS

DAILY 12:30am-8:30am

12:30-1:30 100 Block East Hastings
 1:30-2:30 Driving: Davie, Denman, Robson, Richards, Granville, Nelson, Homer, Abbott
 2:30-2:45 100 Block East Hastings
 2:45-3:15 Driving: First Ave, Broadway, Commercial, 12th, Nanaimo
 3:15am Dundas & Lakewood
 3:30-4:15 Driving: Semlin, Franklin, Clark, Vernon, Glen, Campbell, Hawks, Hastings, Cordova
 4:15-4:30 100 Block East Hastings
 4:30-6:00 Driving: Open Schedule
 6:00-7:00 Portland Hotel, 100 Block East Hastings, Hastings, Hawks, Vernon, Franklin Strip, Commercial, Broadway
 7:00-8:00 100 Block E.Hastings, Cordova, Hawks, Hastings
 8:00-8:30 OFFICE: Limit 5 rigs

VAN TRADES: 5 needles, point for point
BULK TRADES AT OFFICE: 14 day/42 week

OFFICE: 221 MAIN STREET, 685-6561

HOURS: 8:30am to 8pm every day

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE YOUTH ACTIVITIES SOCIETY NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM INFORMATION SHEET

- * The Needle Exchange has expanded continually since its inception. Syringe volume per year:

1989 - 127,806	1990 - 343,995
1991 - 527,248	1992 - 607,385
1993 - 816,589	1994 - 1,157,520

- * From its inception to the end of December 1994, the Needle Exchange has distributed about 3.5 million syringes.

- * As well as providing syringes and other supplies such as bleach, water bottles and alcohol wipes to IV drug users, the Exchange also provides condoms to IV clients and to Vancouver sex trade workers. 1994 condom distribution was 4,412 gross - approximately 635,000 condoms.

- * From January through December 1994, there were 194,589 visits to the Exchange's fixed site, 57,280 more than the 137,309 total visits for 1993.

- * The Needle Exchange is extremely effective in preventing the transmission of HIV. Accumulated provincial statistics show that of those tested for HIV whose sole reported risk is IV drug use, only 2.7% tested positive. It is estimated that the current conversion rate is approximately 5%. This compares with 7-9% in Toronto, 16-18% in Montreal, and 60-70% in New York. The majority of B.C.'s estimated 15,000 IV drug users live in the area serviced by the Exchange.

- * The Needle Exchange prevents not only the transmission of HIV, but also hepatitis, syphilis, gonorrhoea, and other infections transmitted through body fluids.

- * The Exchange's clients are exceptionally responsible. By the end of the first year of operation, clients were returning over 90% of syringes to the Exchange each month. The exchange rate for needles is now averaging over 100% per month.

- * Direct prevention of HIV infection through the provision of clean syringes and condoms is extremely cost effective for the Ministry of Health. A recent U.S. study¹ estimated the average cost of treating an HIV-infected person as \$119,000 U.S., a figure supported by a 1991 Vancouver study² which calculated \$157,000 Canadian per IV drug user who died of AIDS. At that rate, the cost to the Ministry of the Needle Exchange's requested budget is equivalent to paying for treatment for less than five IV users who would otherwise become infected with HIV.

- * The Needle Exchange provides a window for referral of clients to other services, such as alcohol and drug counselling, vein maintenance and medical care. Many clients who approach the Exchange for help are not comfortable approaching other agencies.

¹ Dr. Peter Lurie et al, *The Public Health Impact of Needle Exchange Programs in the U.S. and Abroad, Vol.1*; School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley; 1993

² Andrew S. Posen, *Economic Implications of Vancouver's Needle Exchange Program*; Poster Presentation at the VIII International Conference on AIDS/III STD Congress; Amsterdam, The Netherlands; 1992.

- * The Exchange has on staff a community environment worker who coordinates cleaning up discarded needles and condoms throughout the Exchange's service area. This ensures pickup of the many syringes not already turned in to the Exchange.
- * The Berkeley study³ concluded that there was no increase in discarded syringes due to the presence of an exchange in the city.
- * The Vancouver Needle Exchange is internationally known for the success of its initiatives and is credited as a major reason HIV infection in British Columbia has not spread widely among intravenous drug users and sex trade workers, and from there into the general heterosexual population.
- * In the 1993 study The Public Health Impact of Needle Exchange Programs in the U.S. and Abroad⁴, researchers made special mention of the achievements of the Vancouver Exchange, noting:
 - * In comparison to 20 other exchanges, Vancouver ranked:
 - second after New York in number of clients served.
 - third after New York and San Francisco in number of syringes distributed.
 - second out of 12 in proportion of community IV drug users ever served (average 31-39% of IV population).
 - second out of 18 after San Francisco in number of syringes distributed per hour open (average # 599 per hour).
 - * The cost per syringe distributed was 65 cents at DEYAS compared to \$3.10 at Toronto's The Works and \$2.50 at Montreal's CACTUS.
 - * The percentage of the exchange's annual budget spent on personnel was 27% at DEYAS, compared to 68% at the Works and 78% at CACTUS. This was the lowest proportion spent on personnel out of 16 exchanges in the U.S. and Canada, despite the fact that many of these exchanges had supplies donated.
- * The Berkeley study was based on 1992 figures. In fact, 1994 visits to the DEYAS Exchange were more than double 1992 visits, while 1994 syringe volume was 191% higher than the 1992 figure.

³ Op.cit, Lurie et al.

⁴ Op. cit., Lurie et al.