



The State of Safe Consumption Spaces in the United States: Strategies for Building a Movement

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

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I have no conflicts of interest.

WHAT ARE SAFE CONSUMPTION SPACES?



“Supervised injection sites are legally sanctioned and supervised facilities designed to reduce the health and public order problems associated with illegal injection drug use. They enable the consumption of pre-obtained drugs in an anxiety and stress-free atmosphere, under hygienic and low risk conditions. Commonly, the purpose of SIS’s are to reduce public disorder and enhance public safety, reduce overdose morbidity and mortality, reduce transmission of blood-borne infections, and improve access to other health and social services.”

--“What is the effectiveness of supervised injection services?”

Ontario HIV Treatment Network, May 2014

SO DO SAFE CONSUMPTION SPACES WORK?



- Eliminates drug overdose deaths on-site, while reducing OD deaths in the surrounding neighborhood;
- Minimizes risks for abscesses, bacterial infections and endocarditis;
- Minimizes the risk of HIV, hep B and hep C transmission;
- Provides a gateway for entry to drug treatment, medical care and social services;
- Reduce discarded syringes, litter, and other public disorder concerns related to injection drug use
- ...and saves money while doing all of this!

(sources at the end)

SAFE CONSUMPTION SPACES WORLDWIDE



- First sanctioned SCS: Berne, Switzerland in 1986;
- There are approximately 130+ in over 70 cities throughout Western Europe, Canada, and Australia;
- Canada has seen a rapid uptick in SCS since 2017 in response to their opioid crisis;
- Several European countries at various stages of consideration/planning
- There are no legally sanctioned SCS in the United States

SAFE CONSUMPTION SPACES WORLDWIDE



100+ Safe Consumption Spaces Worldwide



STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING AN SCS MOVEMENT



- Build a community coalition
 - Think beyond just harm reduction and health partnerships.
 - Include
- Partner with researchers
 - Conduct qualitative and quantitative research
 - Cost effectiveness analysis
- Reach out to larger, national organizations like Drug Policy Alliance and Harm Reduction Coalition

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY: INCLUDE PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS!!!



- Inclusion of people who use drugs is the single, most essential element of any successful harm reduction intervention, and it is no different for SCS.
- PWUD need to be included in all aspects of SCS, from planning and design to operation and staffing to evaluation.
- Employ PWUD to educate the community about SCS, and hire them to staff SCS when you open one.

FINALLY, A HARDER QUESTION: DO WE WAIT OR DO WE OPEN THEM NOW?



- Harm reduction has almost never been sanctioned first by the authorities and then put into play in the community;
- If we wait for the Federal government, we'll likely be waiting for a long time
 - Some state and municipal governmental bodies have been more open
- An act of civil disobedience may be in order
 - Lots of risks, obviously, and no one should do this without ample planning and support
- Its worth careful consideration, especially after the November presidential election

NEXT STEPS



- Interested in joining an SCS work-group?
 - Email me: areynoldshcv@gmail.com
- Stay tuned for:
 - Safe consumption space webinar series
 - Safe consumption space PWUD Community Advisory Board

THANKS!



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