



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 24, 2023

TO: The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

FROM: Ann C. Fisher, Chairperson
GACEC

RE: **Senate Bill No. 52 Sterile Needle and Syringe Exchange Program**

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed Senate Bill No. 52, which seeks to amend the current law governing needle exchange programs to support a need-based program. This will be accomplished by changing the name of the program from "exchange" to "service" and by removing the requirement of a 1:1 exchange, to dispensing sterile needles and syringes based on need and usage. Council **supports** this legislation as a critical substance use prevention and public health initiative.

Brandywine Counseling runs the needle exchange program in Delaware. Over the years, Brandywine Counseling has enrolled 5200 IV drug users in the program and dispensed 1.5 million sterile needles. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a comprehensive report on the efficacy and success of needle programs in 2022. "Nearly 30 years of research has shown that comprehensive sterile needle and syringe programs (SSPs) are safe, effective, and cost saving, do not increase illegal drug use or crime, and play an important role in reducing the transmission of viral hepatitis, HIV and other infections. Research shows that new users of SSPs are five times more likely to enter drug treatment and about three times more likely to stop using drugs than those who do not use the programs. CDC and Brandywine Counseling both refer to these programs as Needle Service programs, not exchanges.

A Sterile Needle and Syringe Service Program is an important component in the state's response to the opioid crisis, while helping to prevent Hepatitis and HIV infections, preventing disability and death.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our support of Senate Bill No. 52. Please feel free to contact me or Pam Weir at the GACEC office should you have any questions.