



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY  
ADMINISTRATION

## County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY  
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Richard Smith, R.N.

Dear Richard:

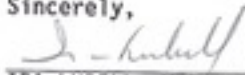
We are writing regarding the grant application that is being submitted by the Santa Cruz Needle Exchange Program to the Chicago Resource Center. As you are aware, there is a growing body of literature supporting services that provide sterile needles and syringes in exchange for used ones turned in by injection drug users. Many prominent public health professionals believe that this strategy is the best method that is currently available to stop the alarming spread of HIV disease in persons who are not able or ready to accept or secure drug treatment.

The California Legislature is currently considering legislation to provide a legal means to allow needle exchange programs to be studied in California. We are very hopeful that such legislation will be forthcoming. San Francisco has already embarked on a program of needle exchange based on the concept that the County Health Office has the legal authority to take emergency measures to stop an epidemic.

We believe that the Santa Cruz Program is doing what an ideal needle exchange program should do relative to the information and educational components of the service. We understand that the volunteers are also providing a vital link between the program users and the drug treatment community, particularly in the form of advocacy and referral. We have received feedback that the concern and the knowledge of the volunteers have made successful inroads into the injection drug using community that has prompted many users to seek treatment, some for the first time.

We hope that you will be successful in your efforts to secure funding to help stop the spread of this terrible disease in our community. We hope further that the Legislature will be successful in their efforts to provide the legal framework to conduct such programs.

Sincerely,

  
IRA LUBELL, M.D., M.P.H.  
Health Officer/Medical Director  
IL:sp

  
ELIZABETH MCCARTHY, R.N., M.S.  
Chief of Public Health

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