

Who we are ...

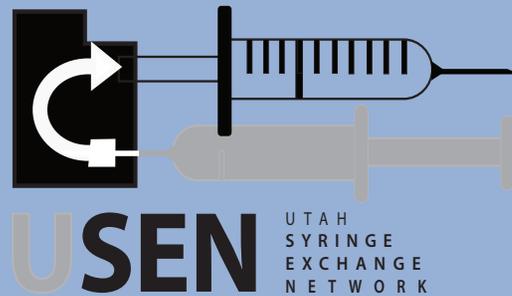
The Utah Syringe Exchange Network (USEN) comprises state and local agencies, nonprofits, law enforcement, healthcare organizations, and concerned individuals working together to bring about healthier communities by reducing the spread of disease and other health concerns among people who inject drugs.

What we do ...

USEN promotes practical solutions for individuals and communities to reduce harm associated with substance injection. We work toward this goal by advocating for public-health and policy reforms, educating stakeholders, and creating relationships that bring about opportunities to broaden the reach of syringe exchange services across the state.

Why we do it ...

We believe that it is crucial to provide educational opportunities for people who inject drugs so they can make informed, healthy lifestyle choices. We also strive to uphold every individual's right to health and well-being. We support a compassionate and proactive approach to healthcare services for people who inject drugs, and we maintain that syringe exchange is just one component to providing people who inject drugs with opportunities for a healthier future.



For more information about syringe exchange in Utah, please contact syringeexchange@utah.gov

Utah Syringe Exchange Network



Syringe Exchange in Utah

Recognizing the need to minimize the spread of disease across the state, legislation outlining a syringe exchange program in Utah was signed into law in 2016. Syringe exchange operations in Utah began on December 1, 2016. Organizations that apply to become syringe exchange operators are required to provide participants with access to clean syringes and informational resources and must submit quarterly reports to the Utah Department of Health.

Syringe exchange operators in Utah actively seek to help people who inject drugs make informed choices about their health and work to make communities safer by collecting and properly disposing of used syringes. The Utah syringe exchange program and other programs aimed at addressing broader social issues surrounding drug use are essential to effectively help people who inject drugs make more informed decisions and have an opportunity for a healthier future.

Fast Facts about Syringe Exchange in Utah

1. Governor Herbert signed syringe exchange legislation into law in 2016.

2. Syringe exchange operators must offer all participants clean syringes in exchange for used syringes and information on the following subjects: clean injection practices, the spread of disease, opportunities for substance treatment, disease testing, and overdose prevention and reversal.

3. Syringe exchange operations have collected and properly disposed of more than 80,000 used syringes.

4. Syringe exchange operators have connected with hundreds of individual clients.

5. Preliminary data, from the first six months of the syringe exchange program, show promising results. The program is on track to be a successful means of preventing outbreaks of HIV and HCV in Utah.



Spread of Disease

A blood-borne disease is a blood infection that can be passed from one person to another through exposure to contaminated blood. In the past five years in Utah, the number of newly reported cases of blood-borne diseases, such as HIV, hepatitis C (HCV), and hepatitis B (HBV), has risen. Increases in new cases correlate with increases in injection drug use. People who inject drugs and share syringes, needles, and other equipment put themselves at risk for contracting blood-borne diseases.

The primary goal of syringe exchange programs is to reduce the spread of blood-borne diseases and minimize blood infections by providing clean, sterile syringes and other injection equipment to people who inject drugs. Syringe exchange programs have proven to be highly effective in accomplishing that goal. Syringe exchange programs also provide a point of contact to substance use treatment for people who inject drugs.