



Hamilton

INFORMATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members Board of Health
DATE:	November 27, 2019
SUBJECT:	Community Sharps Disposal Bins (Wards 1, 2 and 3)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Wards 1, 2, and 3
SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director, Epidemiology, Wellness and Communicable Disease Control Division Public Health Services
SIGNATURE:	<i>Michelle Baird</i>

The purpose of this Information Update is to inform the Mayor and members of Board of Health of an initiative to reduce the unsafe disposal of needles and drug paraphernalia in public spaces through increasing access to safe disposal locations for sharps in our community.

To address the issue of needle debris in the community, Public Health Services (PHS) in partnership with the Public Works – Parks Division, will be installing Community Sharps Disposal Bins in a variety of locations within the City of Hamilton. The first phase will involve installation of sharps disposal bins at eight parks in Wards 1, 2 and 3. (Appendix A provides a map of the eight park locations). The parks selected to receive sharps disposal bins were chosen based on the needle debris currently being found in and around these areas. Public Health Services will be evaluating the utilization of the bins, their placement and their effectiveness in reducing needle debris.

The installation of these disposal bins is part of a larger strategy to address needle debris including the Community Points program, expansion of fixed satellite needle exchange sites and appropriate sharps disposal promotion for the public and for persons who are injecting substances.

Background

Needles debris in public places is a challenging issue for the City. Needles are used by people with specific health conditions and some people who use drugs. Ensuring that all

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

people who use needles can access safe disposal, and that stray needles, also called sharps, are dealt with promptly and safely is a priority for the City.

Improperly discarded needles can be a community health hazard. Discarded needles may be contaminated with human blood, body fluid, other infectious material and/or medication/street drugs. Exposure to these contaminants through the piercing of skin or contact with already broken skin may pose a health risk for transmission of certain infections and lead to concern for the individual involved. To promote community safety, PHS continues to collaborate with the AIDS Network and other city departments to provide a discarded needle clean-up program. However, the demand for needle debris collection throughout the City is rising and the programs in place do not fully meet community needs.

The Ontario Public Health Standards, Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction Guideline (2018), requires that Boards of Health provide or ensure the availability of initiatives related to the disposal of used harm reduction supplies. In addition, the Hamilton Drug Strategy recommends the City continue to provide and should increase the options available for safe needle disposal, such as offering community sharps disposal bins.

Community disposal bins have long been established as an effective intervention to address needle debris. Riley, (1998) reported that in Baltimore, the initial hesitancy among community members (related to sending mixed message about drug use and an increase in loitering) was eventually reversed following installation of community sharps bins, reporting that all focus groups supported expansion of the project. A study in Montreal found that disposal bins significantly reduced needle debris in the surrounding 200-meter radius area by up to 98% (De Montigny et al., 2010). Disposal bins have been introduced successfully in many jurisdictions across Ontario.

Providing sharps disposal bins within the community is an evidence informed response to decrease discarded needles found in both public and private spaces. Additionally, introducing disposal bins would provide an opportunity to raise community awareness about needle safety and reduce the risk of injury from discarded needles.

For further information, or if there are any questions, please contact Michelle Baird at (905) 546-2424 ext. 3529 or michelle.baird@hamilton.ca.

References:

1. De Montigny, L., Moudon, A. V., Leigh, B., & Young, K. (2010). Assessing a drop box programme: A spatial analysis of discarded needles. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 21(3), 208-214.
2. Parkin, S., & Coomber, R. (2011). Injecting drug user views (and experiences) of drug-related litter bins in public places: A comparative study of qualitative research findings obtained from UK settings. *Health & Place*. 17(6): 1218-1227.
3. Riley, E., Beilenson, P., Vlahov, D., Smith, L., Koenig, M., Stephen Jones, T., & Doherty, M. (1998). Operation Red Box: a pilot project of needle and syringe drop boxes for injection drug users in East Baltimore. *Journal of acquired immune deficiency syndromes and human retrovirology*, 18, S120-S125.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Information Update - Community Sharps Disposal Bins



APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY SHARPS DISPOSAL BIN LOCATIONS CITY OF HAMILTON

MINOR ROAD	PARK	BUILDING



The City of Hamilton accepts no liability for any loss, damage, or inconvenience resulting from the use of, or reliance on, the information contained herein. This product is provided "as-is" without any warranties, guarantees, or representations of any kind. This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for, or be suitable for, legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. (c) 2019 City of Hamilton. Published by Spatial Solutions Services, IT, City of Hamilton, on October 18 2019