May 26, 2016

Allen County Board of Commissioners
200 E. Berry St., 4th Floor
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

RE: Declaration of Local Public Health Emergency

Dear Commissioners,

Although this information was declared to you verbally (and via other methods) at both the February 12, 2016 public meeting of the Commissioners as well as at the May 16, 2016 public hearing held by the Commissioners on the Hepatitis C (HCV) epidemic and subsequent pursuit of a syringe services program, I wanted to provide this official document reiterating the actual declaration for your files.

As you know, I declared a local public health emergency to the Allen County Executive Board of Health on October 5, 2015 at which time the Board passed a motion to support the pursuit of a Syringe Services Program in accordance with IC 16-41-7.5. They unanimously passed a motion which stated: "The Board recognizes that an epidemic of Hepatitis C is supported by available data; consequently the Board proposes the starting of the process to begin a needle exchange program in Allen County."

Further, I then stated at the February 12, 2016 public meeting before the Board of Commissioners as well as during the public hearing held on May 16, 2016, that I did and do declare a public health emergency to exist in Allen County, Indiana, such that:

- There is an epidemic of Hepatitis C occurring in Allen County;
- The primary mode of transmission of the Hepatitis C cases is from intravenous drug use (IVDU); and
- A syringe services program is medically appropriate as part of an overall comprehensive public health response to this epidemic.

My declaration is supported by the following:

- Allen County’s HCV epidemic is evidenced by a 60% increase in HCV cases in 2015 as compared to year’s prior and that trend is continuing.
- We have identified IVDU as the primary mode of transmission.
• Significant testing, referral, mental health and addiction services are in place locally by way of multiple mental health centers and counseling services as well as many in-patient treatment services for these issues. The mental health/addiction community has stepped up over the past year due to the overall opiate crisis nationally and locally and are poised to provide services as needed. These services alone, however, have proven ineffective against the spread of Hepatitis C and other diseases such as HIV.

• A syringe services program is medically appropriate at this point to assist in the fight against the Hepatitis C epidemic and will allow opportunities to link people to appropriate addiction and counseling services to save lives and assist with their recovery.

We appreciate the Commissioners’ efforts with regard to not only holding the public hearing to allow for public input on a syringe services program, but the affirmative vote to pursue and officially request the allowance of this program as required under IC 16-41-7.5 from the Indiana State Department of Health.

Thank you for your support of this important public health matter and we look forward to the hopeful implementation of a comprehensive syringe services program for Allen County.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Deborah A. McMahan, MD
Allen County Health Commissioner
Commissioners Present: Nelson Peters, Linda Bloom, Therese Brown
Staff Present: Mike Green, PIO, Chris Cloud and Beth Lock

Commissioner Peters explained that the public hearing is a requirement of Indiana Code 16 41-7.5 which states that the executive body of the county, in this case the Allen County Board of Commissioners, must hold a public hearing before a qualified entity may operate a syringe exchange program in the county. The Board of Commissioners will ultimately vote on whether to adopt the declarations by our Health Commissioner that –

1) There is an epidemic of Hepatitis C or HIV
2) That the primary mode of transmission of Hepatitis C or HIV in the county is through intravenous drug use, and
3) That a syringe exchange program is medically appropriate as part of a comprehensive public health response.

Commissioner Peters explained the ground rules to keep the proceeding orderly. He stated they would take comments from those in the audience that signed up upon entering the room. Once those people have spoken, an opportunity will be provided for others to speak who did not sign up.

Speakers-

Jeffrey Markley – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
Executive Director – NE Indiana Positive Resource Connection – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
- The proposed Ordinance contains the principal concepts that have the endorsement and support of the CDC, the National Institute of Health, the American Medical Association and many others.

Deb Lambert – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
FW-AC Department of Health
- Hep C Statistics in Allen County – confirmed cases
  o 2012 – 166
  o 2013 – 143 (14% decrease)
  o 2014 – 146 (2% increase)
  o 2015 – 238 (61% increase)
- Healthcare is about trust (this is especially important when dealing with illegal use)
  o Opposed to testing requirements
- We (taxpayers) will pay for this one way or another, whether proactively or reactively
  o Hep C treatment is $100K per person; AIDS/HIV is $400K per person

Karen Albright – passed but said she is in SUPPORT of previous speakers

Valerie Stuckey – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
Nurse Practitioner (involved in addiction and recovery)
- 1-to-1 does not correlate to more dirty needle disposal
- 1-to-1 does little to thwart dirty syringe usage
Andrew Barchus – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
Nurse Practitioner (Parkview Physicians Group of Infectious Diseases)
• Express official support to the syringe exchange ordinance
• Should strive to eradicate Hep C, but it is a long way off

Tim Stelte – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
Long-term recovery
• Has not used since Sept. 30, 2001
• Many close friends have used needles
• Medicaid and private insurers are denying treatment unless someone is very sick
• Needle Exchange can be the point of contact for the addict to learn what resources are available
• “The Big Fix” – journey to sobriety started at the needle exchange

Tracy Brooks – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
Manchester School of Pharmacy
• May 9th – Indiana below the US trend in heroin use
• Up 600% since 2001 in heroin use
• Heroin use is growing at 12%; Meth at 13%
• 4 patients with increased health costs due to bacterial infections from dirty needles

Dr. Debra McMahan – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
Health Commissioner - Board of Health
• In October 2015 based on a 60% increase in Hep C and 30% increase in HIV, the FW/AC Board of Health recognized that an epidemic of Hep C was supported by available data. Consequently the Board proposed starting the process to begin a needle exchange program in Allen County.
• A committee of local stakeholders met several times and the SSP protocol was discussed and modified several times. The group was very professional and collaborative and willing to work many hours on this project.
• In April 2016 the Board of Health accepted the final evidenced based SSP protocol that was submitted by the committee.

Kevin Hunter – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
Captain FW Police Dept. – Vice & Narcotics Division

Mindy Waldron – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
Administrator – FW/AC Dept. of Health
• Tax monies will not be the main source for funding this proposed SSP
• The supplies intended for use in the program will also be sought by a grant funding or other donations
• The testing services for Hep C and HIV for clients who opt to be tested will be provided at no cost by the Indiana State Dept. of Health
• The mental health services offered at the site will be provided by Park Center
• The site for the program is being provided at no cost by the Positive Resource Connection
• The only local funding planned for use at this time would be for disposal of used needles which is a service that their department currently undertakes anyway. Total cost for this that they pay currently is just $750 per year.
Michelle Merritt – Spoke in SUPPORT of the ordinance
Resident of Allen County, (Volunteer Exec. Director – Track Limitless Recovery)
  • Feb 12, 2015- son OD’d on Heroin for the first time
  • Opposes the required testing of HIV or Hep C
  • Substance abuse is the only public health issue that we still prosecute those with the illness

Commissioner Bloom made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Bloom made a motion to affirm the declarations by our Health Commissioner and Board of Health that –

1) There is an epidemic of Hepatitis C or HIV
2) That the primary mode of transmission of Hepatitis C or HIV in the county is through intravenous drug use, and
3) That a syringe exchange program is medically appropriate as part of a comprehensive public health response

Commissioner Brown seconded the motion to affirm the Board of Health’s plan to move forward with the State Board of Health to pursue the necessary steps to operate a syringe exchange program.

Vote Nay – Peters

Motion carried 2-1 (Peters)
May 23, 2016

Jerome Adams, MD
State Health Commissioner
Indiana State Department of Health
2 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Dr. Adams,

Thank you for your leadership in the Opiate Crisis we are experiencing as a nation and a state. Due to a 60% increase in Hepatitis C (most cases of which were attributable to IVDU) in 2015, we began the process of requesting permission to establish a Syringe Services Program (SSP).

Attached you will find a copy of the request from our Commissioners to you and also a copy of our SSP protocol. We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and attention to this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. McMahan, MD
Health Commissioner
Fort Wayne Allen County Department of Health
May 20, 2016

Jerome Adams, MD
State Health Commissioner
Indiana State Department of Health
2 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Dr. Adams,

Pursuant to IC 16-41-7.5, Allen County has taken the following steps in order to pursue the implementation of a syringe services program:

(1) On October 5, 2015, the Allen County Health Commissioner, Dr. Deborah McMahan, declared a public health emergency to exist in Allen County to the Executive Board of Health, and more specifically that:
   a. An epidemic of Hepatitis C exists in Allen County;
   b. The primary mode of transmission of Hepatitis C in the county is through intravenous drug use; and
   c. A syringe services program is medically appropriate as part of a comprehensive public health response.

   The Executive Board of Health passed a motion on 10/5/2015 indicating they felt the data supported the existence of an epidemic of Hepatitis C and asked the Department of Health to pursue the implementation of a syringe services program.

(2) The Allen County Board of Commissioner held a public hearing on May 16, 2016, allowing for public testimony regarding Dr. McMahan’s declaration and the concept of and plan for the proposed syringe services program in Allen County. The hearing was held in the Citizens Square Building, 200 E. Berry St., Suite 035, Fort Wayne, IN 46802 at 3:00pm.

(3) The Board of Commissioners considered the information and request presented by Dr. McMahan, including the fact that there are strong law enforcement, mental health and drug treatment programs provided locally, yet these measures alone have proven ineffective in preventing the epidemic. The Board of Commissioners took official action, passing a motion accepting the declarations made by Dr. McMahan regarding this public health emergency and are, by way of this letter, requesting the State Health Commissioner to declare a public health emergency on behalf of the Allen County to allow the establishment of a syringe services program pursuant to IC 16-41-7.5.

Thank you for your consideration and response on this important request.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Therese M. Brown    Linda K. Bloom    Nelson Peters
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

between

Positive Resource Connection (PRC)

and

The Fort Wayne-Allen County Department of Health (DOH)

I. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to formalize the commitment of the Positive Resource Connection (PRC) to partner with and support the Fort Wayne-Allen County Department of Health (DOH) in providing needle/syringe exchange services to IV Drug Users seeking such services including education and appropriate referrals regarding substance abuse and addiction at their location.

II. Agreements and Objectives

The objective of this MOU is to define the arrangements between PRC and the DOH with regard to providing syringe services at their location for at least one ½ day per week or as otherwise agreed upon.

PRC will agree to provide:

- The location & space to house the Syringe Services Program (SSP) as well as additional private space for appropriate STD testing and Counseling services within their current location located at 525 Oxford Street, Ft. Wayne, IN 46806 at no charge.
- Funding to cover the wages for the SSP staff person (a part-time, trained staff person skilled in working with this population who will handle the needle exchange and referral duties of the SSP). The PRC will pay this person accordingly as an employee of the PRC.

DOH will agree to provide:

- The staff to provide the actual STD testing when requested by SSP participants.
- The supplies needed for the STD testing services.
- The staff to provide wound care services as needed for the participants.
- An ongoing relationship with a mental health and counseling provider which will also provide an onsite counselor during the hours of the SSPs operation.
- Proof of Insurance for liability coverage while working at PRC’s site.

III. Implementation of This MOU

This MOU will be implemented once executed.

IV. Effective Date

This MOU is effective on the date signed by the parties hereto, and will remain in effect until one or more of the parties provide written notification of termination. This MOU will be reevaluated on an annual basis or otherwise determined basis to assure all parties still agree on the terms but will be automatically renewed from year to year unless otherwise determined in writing by all parties.
V. Modification
This MOL may only be revised by written approval of the parties that signed below, or their designee.

[Signature]
Printed Name: [Name]
Position: [Title]
Date: 9-14-16

Positive Resource Connection
Mailing Address: 525 Oxford St., Fort Wayne, IN 46806
Phone Number(s): 260-744-1149
Email: [Email]

[Signature]
Date: 9-14-16

Mindy Waldron, REHS, CFSP
Department Administrator
Fort Wayne-Allen County Department of Health
200 E. Berry St., Suite 360, Fort Wayne, IN 46802
260-449-7578 (office) / 260-241-1034 (cell)
Linda K. Bloom  
Therese M. Brown  
F. Nelson Peters  
Board of Commissioners of the County of Allen  
Citizens Square, Suite 410  
200 East Berry Street  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802

Dear Commissioners:

Re: Allen County Syringe Exchange Program Proposal

My office has reviewed the Allen County Syringe Exchange Program proposal initially received on May 26, 2016, and then re-submitted with additional information on September 29, 2016. Pursuant to the County’s request and the authority provided under IC 16-41-7.5, this letter serves as my formal declaration of a public health emergency on behalf of Allen County to include the period of October 6, 2016 through October 5, 2017. Please be advised that while there are no appropriated funds for the implementation of syringe exchange programs, the Indiana State Department of Health will assist Allen County as much as possible as it moves forward with this very important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Jerome M. Adams, MD, MPH  
STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DECLARED IN ALLEN COUNTY

INDIANAPOLIS—State Health Commissioner Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H., today declared a public health emergency for Allen County, allowing the local health department to establish a syringe exchange program as part of a broader effort to reduce the spread of hepatitis C. The declaration of public health emergency will run through Oct. 5, 2017.

“Allen County is experiencing an increase in hepatitis C cases, which puts the county at risk for other diseases spread through intravenous drug use,” said State Health Commissioner Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H. “By implementing a syringe exchange in conjunction with testing, referrals to treatment and enrollment in health insurance, Allen County is taking steps to reduce the harm caused by substance abuse and improve the health of its communities.”

Senate Enrolled Act 461 made syringe exchange programs legal in Indiana for the first time, under certain circumstances. The law lays out a set of procedural and substantive requirements that local communities must meet in order for an emergency declaration to be considered by the state health commissioner.

Steps in the process for local communities:

- Local health officer must:
  - Declare that an epidemic of hepatitis C or HIV exists
  - Determine that it is primarily transmitted through IV drug use
  - Deem that a syringe exchange program is medically appropriate as part of a comprehensive response
- County commissioners must:
  - Hold a public hearing
  - Take official action adopting the declarations of the local health officer (above)
  - Describe other actions taken regarding the epidemic that have proven ineffective
  - Request a public health emergency declaration from the state

By declaring this public health emergency, the state health commissioner concurs with the declarations of the local health officer and county commissioners. By law, specific aspects of design and implementation of the program are left to local officials. No state funding is used to support syringe exchange programs.

Dr. Adams has previously declared public health emergencies in Clark, Lawrence, Madison, Monroe, Fayette, Wayne and Scott counties.

For questions regarding the Allen County syringe exchange program, contact Megan Reust at (260) 449-7395.

For important health and safety information, visit the Indiana State Department of Health at www.StateHealth.in.gov or follow us on Twitter at @StateHealthIN and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/isdh1.

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For Immediate Release

State Dept. of Health declares public health emergency for Allen County, approves syringe services program

ALLEN COUNTY, Ind. (10/06/2016). – The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has declared a public health emergency for Allen County, allowing the Fort Wayne-Allen County Department of Health to establish a syringe services program (SSP) in an effort to reduce the spread of HIV and hepatitis C.

The Department of Health, including community partners Positive Resource Connection and Park Center, will open the SSP in early November at 519 Oxford Street in Fort Wayne.

Along with providing new, clean needles and sharps disposal containers, the SSP will also provide free HIV and hepatitis C testing, and make referrals to treatment and other social services such as addiction services. The SSP is one of a number of harm reduction initiatives by the Department of Health and the Opiate Task Force to address the opioid issue in Allen County. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), SSPs are an effective way to minimize transmission of hepatitis C and HIV.

In 2015, as a result of a significant increase in both in Allen County, the Board of Health authorized the Department to begin the process of establishing a local SSP as part of an opioid strategic plan. On October 6, 2016, the ISDH approved the department’s plan.

The Department of Health is appreciative of its board, the Opiate Task Force, and other community partners who have assisted in the development of an evidence based strategy to begin to address this public health issue as a community. To effectively address a problem of this magnitude requires the engagement and collaboration of the entire community.

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