Harm Reduction refers to strategies, policies and programs aimed at reducing the harms associated with drug use. The aim of harm reduction is to meet active drug users where they are by providing a range of options for help. This can mean everything from helping an individual abstain from drug use altogether or just manage their drug use.

Similarly, the goal is to minimize the associated harm while accepting both illicit and licit drug use for what it is. Prevention Point participates in Harm Reduction by providing a syringe exchange program (SEP).

In this program, injection drug users are provided with clean needles. If they come with no syringes, they can have 10 or 20 depending on the day. If they come with needles, they are provided with the day’s amount plus 1 for each syringe they bring in. The harm reduction approach is that the individuals will use regardless of whether or not they have clean needles. By providing drug users with clean needles, you decrease their risk of contracting blood-borne infections like HIV and Hep C, thus minimizing harm.

**Services at Prevention Point**

With a range of volunteers and full time staff, Prevention Point is able to offer a number of different services:

- Suboxone Program (treatment for opioid addiction)
- Referrals for housing, ID’s, and food
- Confirmatory Hep C Blood Draws
- Syringe Exchange Program
- Women’s Night Program
- Streetside Health Clinic
- Free Meals & Clothing
- Wound Care
- Homeless Shelter
- Case Management
- Legal Services
- HIV and Hep C Testing
- Clinica Bienestar (HIV Specific Clinic)

**Prevention Point Philadelphia**

Prevention Point Philadelphia is a multi-service public health organization located in Kensington. It began as an underground Syringe Exchange in 1991 but was later recognized by the government to help combat the high rates of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C in Philadelphia. The mission of the organization is…

“To reduce the harm associated with substance use and sex industry work by promoting health, empowerment and safety while advocating for humane public policies and programs.”

Since 1991, Prevention Point has grown immensely, working to accomplish this mission by providing a number of services to marginalized groups across the city.

**City of Philadelphia**

These 6 circles represent the location of PPP’s exchange sites. Each small dot represents one of the more than 4000 IDU related cases of AIDS in Philadelphia reported through the end of 2000.

**HIV/AIDS in Philly & the Effectiveness of PPP**

The rate of HIV/ AIDS resulting from Injection Drug Use (IDU) in Philadelphia was reported at 39% in 2001, a number 19% higher than the national average. Since the implementation of the Syringe Exchange Program (SEP) with Prevention Point, these numbers have decreased drastically. In 2014, the incidence rate related to IDU was down to around 5%.

When the government in Philadelphia realized the benefit of this program, possession of syringe exchange was made legal and funding was allocated to these programs. Consequently, Prevention Point has made great progress in working to reduce the IDU- related incidence rate.

**References**


2) Prevention Point Website <http://ppponline.org>


4) AIDS Activities Coordinating Office (AACO) <http://www.aaco.org>


6) Harm Reduction Coalition <http://harmreduction.org>