

# PREVENTION POINT PROVIDES STERILE SYRINGES FOR PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY

**September 15th, 2022**

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

Written by Jeffrey Bobb

Philadelphia Prevention Point is a harm reduction center that provides clean syringes for those in the Philadelphia community.

“Our mission is to promote health, empowerment and safety for communities affected by drug use and poverty,” said Hilary Disch, the communications coordinator at Philadelphia Prevention Point. “We want to make sure that people are empowered to make decisions for themselves. So rather than place expectations on them about where they should be on the spectrum of their drug use, we let them decide for themselves what healthier decisions look like.”

According to the Philadelphia Prevention Point website, the organization was started in 1991 to provide syringes in North Philadelphia.

“We go about our mission by providing over 20 programs,” Disch said. “We did begin as a syringe program as a response to the HIV AIDS crisis in the early 90s. But since then, we have expanded a lot.”

Philadelphia Prevention Point has provided for “nearly 25,000 individuals every year,” according to Disch. The way the program works, according to Disch, is that for one used syringe someone brings in, a sterile syringe is given. Also, Disch explained, emergency packs are given to those who do not have any used syringes.

“At this point we’re bringing in more used syringes than we’re distributing,” Disch said. “That’s because our participants bring them back and other organizations bring us syringes to dispose of for them. We are disposing millions of syringes and getting them off the street.”

Also, as a part of their services, Philadelphia Prevention Point provides support for sex workers. According to Disch, they provide sex workers not only sterile syringes, but also HIV testing, free condoms and safer sex supplies.

“People who engage in that work are at high risk,” Disch said. “They don’t always know if the person paying them has HIV or another infection or disease. Some sex workers have a substance abuse disorder. So, we believe sex work is work, and people who engage in sex work are as human as anybody else and deserve to stay safe and healthy.”

Philadelphia Prevention Point has done a great deal to help prevent the spread of diseases like AIDS by providing sterile syringes. This gives homeless people, sex workers and drug addicts in Philadelphia the support they need.

