



*RE: Campaign for a Healthier New Jersey*

**Campaign for a Healthier New Jersey**

Dear Supporter of a Healthier New Jersey,

As you know, New Jersey faces a public health crisis due to its high rates of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C. New Jersey has the fifth highest rate of adult HIV, the third highest rate of pediatric HIV and one of the highest percentages of women infected with HIV in the nation. Fifty-five percent of these cases are related to injection drug use.

**One way that HIV and hepatitis C are transmitted is by injection drug users sharing syringes because they do not have access to sterile syringes. Other states have addressed this public health crisis by allowing injection drug users access to sterile syringes. This strategy has proven effective in reducing the spread of HIV and other blood-borne diseases without increasing drug use.**

**New Jersey is the only state in the nation with no access whatsoever to sterile syringes to prevent the spread of HIV, hepatitis C and other blood-borne diseases. Syringe exchange programs exist in about 39 states and only three states (Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania) require a prescription to purchase a syringe in a pharmacy.**

In 1998, the AIDS Prevention Coalition was created to advocate for the creation of needle exchange programs in New Jersey. The coalition soon included a broad base of individuals and organizations dedicated to fighting the spread of injection-related diseases.

The Coalition is being reconstituted as the Campaign for a Healthier New Jersey to advocate for allowing the sale of syringes in pharmacies without a prescription, and the removal of syringes from the drug paraphernalia law. This would allow public health professionals to implement effective strategies to prevent injection-related diseases. This strategy was recommended by the Governor's Advisory Council on AIDS in 1996.

**The Campaign for a Healthier New Jersey supports New Jersey Senate Bills No. 823 and 494 and Assembly Bills No. 1852 and 2839 which remove the legal barriers to sterile syringe access to prevent the spread of HIV, hepatitis C, and other blood-borne diseases.**

**Please join the Campaign for a Healthier New Jersey by returning our Campaign Response Form. Together we can make a difference!**

Sincerely,

Roseanne Scotti

Director, New Jersey Drug Policy Project- Drug Policy Alliance

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Sponsored by Drug Policy Alliance New Jersey

16 West Front Street, Suite 101A, Trenton, NJ 08608 • Phone: 609-396-8613 • Fax: 609-396-9478

**Email: [nj@drugpolicy.org](mailto:nj@drugpolicy.org)**