



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

MARK T. BENTON • Assistant Secretary for Public Health

Division of Public Health

April 6, 2020

To whom it may concern:

This letter serves to inform interested parties that the NC Division of Public Health considers **syringe services programs** an “**Essential Business and Operation**” under Governor Roy Cooper’s Executive Order No. 121—“Stay at Home Order and Strategic Directions for North Carolina in Response to Increasing COVID-19 Cases.”

NC General Statute § 90-113.27 requires syringe services programs to provide participants with “needles, hypodermic syringes, and other injection supplies at no cost and in quantities sufficient to ensure [they] are not shared or reused,” in addition to disposal of injection supplies, educational materials, and access to naloxone. These services are provided in order to reduce the spread of HIV, viral hepatitis, and other bloodborne diseases and to reduce the number of drug overdoses in North Carolina.

Syringe services programs function under several categories of Essential Businesses and Operations listed in Executive Order No. 121, including “Public Health Operations,” “Human Services Operations,” and “Organizations that provide charitable and social services” (See Section 2, Part C, Subparts 3, 4, and 9). Furthermore, their participants perform Essential Activities under the categories of “For health and safety,” “For necessary supplies and services,” and “To receive goods and services” when they travel outside the home to obtain or exchange supplies with a syringe services program (see Section 1, Part 3, Subparts i, ii, and vii).

All syringe services programs operating in North Carolina are required to register with the NC Division of Public Health. Registered programs are listed on the NC Department of Health and Human Services’ **Safer Syringe Initiative** website at <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/north-carolina-safer-syringe-initiative/syringe-exchange-programs-north>.

In this time of urgent response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the NC Division of Public Health thanks you for your continued support of our state’s syringe services programs and the work they do to halt the spread of life-threatening infectious diseases in North Carolina.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

LOCATION: 5605 Six Forks Road, Building 3, Raleigh, NC 27609
MAILING ADDRESS: 1931 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1931
www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-707-5000 • FAX: 919-870-4829

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