



NORTH CAROLINA HARM REDUCTION COALITION

An Overview of the Work, Programs & Advocacy of the NCHRC

WHO WE ARE

The North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition is a statewide grassroots organization dedicated to the implementation of harm reduction interventions, public health strategies, drug policy transformation and justice reform in North Carolina and throughout the American South. NCHRC engages in grassroots advocacy, resource and policy development, coalition building, and direct services for people impacted by drug use, incarceration, sex work, overdose, gender, HIV and hepatitis.

ADVOCACY

Overdose Prevention: In order to save lives from drug overdose, in 2013 NCHRC helped advocate for the passage of SB20: 911 Good Samaritan/Naloxone Access Law. SB20 grants people who call 911 to report and overdose limited immunity from prosecution for possession of personal amounts of drugs, drug paraphernalia, and underage drinking. The victim is protected from prosecution as well. SB20 also protects medical providers who prescribe naloxone, a medicine used to reverse opioid overdose, from civil or criminal liability, as well as bystanders who administer the medication. SB20 also allows naloxone to be distributed in North Carolina under a medical provider's standing order, a special prescription that pertains to a group of people instead of an individual, and has allowed NCHRC and other organizations to distribute naloxone to the public.

In 2015, NCHRC advocated for SB154: Clarifications to the Good Samaritan Law, which expands protections for civil or criminal liability to pharmacists who dispense naloxone and states that people on probation or parole may not be considered in violation of their conditions if they experience or witness and overdose and seek help.

Needle-stick Prevention: In order to protect law enforcement officers from needle-stick injury, in 2013 NCHRC advocated for HB850: Possession of Needles/ Tell Law Officer law, which states that anyone who declares syringes or other sharp objects to law enforcement prior to search will not be charged for possession of these items. In 2015 NCHRC advocated for HB712: Pilot Program/Used Needle Disposal, which adds protection from drug residue charges to anyone who declares sharps to an officer under HB850. HB712 also allows NCHRC in partnership with the State Bureau of Investigation to establish pilot programs that collect used syringes in 2-4 NC counties.

Syringe Exchange Programs: In order to reduce the transmission of HIV and hepatitis C, further lower needle-stick injury to law enforcement, and connect people who use drugs with treatment options and social services, NCHRC successfully advocated for the legalization of syringe exchange programs (SEPs) in July 2017. SEPs collect used syringes from the community and provide sterile syringes along with HIV/hepatitis C testing and prevention information, linkage to health care, and services.

Syringe exchange programs are shown to drastically reduce HIV and hepatitis C transmission among people who inject drugs, lower needle-stick injury to law enforcement by 66%, clean up syringes from parks and public areas, and reduce drug use and crime by connecting people to social services. Furthermore, participants in SEPs are shown to be five times more likely to enter drug treatment than non-participants.

Fair Chance Hiring: In order to increase the productive participation of formerly incarcerated people in the workforce, NCHRC advocates for Fair Chance Hiring. These policies move the question on criminal background until later in the hiring process, allowing the applicant a chance to demonstrate qualification and rehabilitation. These policies help reduce recidivism, lower crime, and increase the number of productive people in the workforce.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Naloxone: On August 1, 2013, NCHRC launched a naloxone distribution program to provide naloxone free of charge to people at risk for overdose and their loved ones. NCHRC distributes naloxone statewide through a network of volunteers, methadone clinics, treatment centers, and pharmacies. NCHRC also provides free training and technical assistance to law enforcement departments wishing to equip officers and deputies with naloxone.

Syringe Exchange: As of January 2017, NCHRC has implemented more than a dozen syringe exchange programs throughout the state in order to reduce the transmission of HIV and Hep C through the distribution of sterile syringes. NCHRC provides an initial donation of syringes for programs wishing to start-up in North Carolina.

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion: Fayetteville Police Department, NCHRC has begun to lay the foundations for LEAD in the Fayetteville, NC area to divert low-level drug and prostitution offenders to treatment and social services.

Harm Reduction Education, Outreach, and Resources: provides public health education, support groups and presentations on a variety of topics, including drug overdose, naloxone access, HIV and hepatitis C, transgender services, risk-reduction counseling, drug use and sex work, law enforcement safety, diversion programs, syringe access and more. Feel free to contact us to request information or a training at your location on any of the above topics.



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