

Background

Over the past few years, substance use has changed within the City of Greater Sudbury (CGS) in line with national trends. The Sudbury Action Centre for Youth (SACY) and other community partners are observing changes in the spaces where people inject drugs, the number of people who inject drugs, and a widening geographical area in which syringes are being found. SACY is the contracted vendor responsible for needle collection services and continues to report a rise in the number of discarded syringes in stationary syringe recovery bins, along with loose syringes found on the ground. Complaints from citizens and community service providers regarding the number of syringes discarded on public property persists. Although the downtown core remains the largest hotspot for used syringe pick-ups, outlying communities are increasingly becoming areas of concern.

Syringe Recovery Bins

Currently, fourteen stationary syringe recovery bins are maintained and serviced by CGS through SACY as the contracted vendor. These bins are located strategically in the downtown core and priority areas to assist with the collection of discarded drug using equipment. These bins and their locations are reviewed regularly to ensure their effectiveness. Although the servicing of the syringe recovery bins are on a set schedule, 2020 has seen an increase in additional service requests due to the amount of discarded syringes which has been further amplified by the COVID pandemic.

Due to an identified need in the community, the Community Drug Strategy – through Public Health Sudbury and District (PHSD) purchased three additional bins in 2020, bringing the total number of bins to 14.

Used Needle Recovery Services

Since November 2017, the Sudbury Action Centre for Youth (SACY) has provided outreach, education and used syringe recovery services for the City of Greater Sudbury. SACY completes strategic daily sweeps of the city to locate and safely remove used syringes found on public property. A business case for the 2020 Budget was submitted and approved to amend the existing agreement between CGS and SACY to increase funding for staffing of syringe recovery services to respond to an identified service gap in the community. From January to July 2020, SACY has recovered 235,185 syringes surpassing the total for the same timeframe in 2019 of 123,191. Some of this increase can be attributed to an increase in community vigilance to report sightings of used syringes to SACY and 311, which has created further pressure on the existing service level. As a result of the increased volume and a wider geographical area where syringes are being found, SACY's response times have lengthened, however they continue to respond to these complaints at their earliest opportunity.

Next Steps

A business case (estimated value under \$100,000) will be submitted through the 2021 Budget process to enhance services related to used syringe recovery and disposal. SACY provide public education to syringe users, regarding options for safe disposal of used syringes and to members of the public on safe collection and disposal of discarded syringes. This service will be monitored and reported on an annual basis.

Staff will continue to work collaboratively with community partners and the Community Drug Strategy Committee to address challenges related to the increase of opioid use in the city.

References

Used Syringe Recovery Program – Update 2018

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1260&itemid=14333&lang=en>

Used Syringe Recovery Program – Update 2019

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1351&itemid=16421&lang=en>

Community Drug Strategy Report

[https://www.phsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Need for and feasibility of implementing supervised consumption services in the City of Greater Sudbury EN-3.pdf](https://www.phsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Need_for_and_feasibility_of_implementing_supervised_consumption_services_in_the_City_of_Greater_Sudbury_EN-3.pdf)