

New York State Safe Sharps Collection Program (November 2017)

Safe disposal of used sharps, including hypodermic needles and syringes, is critically important for the health and safety of New Yorkers and the State's environment. When these sharps come from places other than health care settings—such as individual residences and non-health-related facilities—there are specific considerations and challenges. Fortunately, New York has special programs designed to address them.

1. Syringe Exchange Programs (SEPs): Since 1992, the NYS Commissioner of Health has authorized syringe exchange programs in New York to provide new sterile syringes in exchange for used syringes. Currently there are 23 SEPs operating over 70 sites as well as Peer Delivered Syringe Exchange services. Approximately 3 million syringes are exchanged annually through these programs. SEPs also accept household-generated sharps from non-SEP participants. For more information on site locations and hours of operation, visit: http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/harm_reduction/needles_syringes/docs/sep_hours_sites.pdf

2. Hospitals and Nursing Homes Sharps Disposal Program: Since 1993, all 221 hospitals and 627 nursing homes in the state of New York are mandated by law, to accept used sharps from individuals as a free community service. For more information on location and hours of operation, visit: <http://www.health.ny.gov/sharps-collection>

3. New York State Alternative Sharps Collection Program: Implemented in 2001, a vital component of the Expanded Syringe Access Program (ESAP), is the New York State Alternative Safe Sharps Collection Program. ESAP allows pharmacies, health care practitioners and health care facilities, which have registered with the Department of Health, to sell or furnish up to ten syringes to persons 18 years of age or older without a medical prescription. ESAP providers, are required to provide information on safe disposal options to their clients when selling or furnishing syringes. One of these options is the New York State Alternative Safe Sharps Collection Program.



Co-located sharps and drugs collection kiosks in Buffalo

Through the Alternative Sharps Collection Program, pharmacies, health clinics, community-based organizations, public transportation facilities, airports, housing complexes, police and sheriff's stations, town halls, colleges, private, city and federal hospitals, shelter clinics, a dock, parks, a fire department and other venues have become sites for safe sharps collection. In some sites, the sharps collection kiosk are being placed next to a drug collection kiosk. The Department of Health provides sharps collection kiosks and/or wall-mounted units to most of these sites, at no cost. The Department has also made small personal sharps containers (fitpacks) and 1 qt. sharps containers available to individuals for personal use.

There are over 280 sites in 36 counties registered in the program. With 4 registered mobile van programs registered in the program, the number of collection sites increased to over 310 sites. As of October 15, 2017, 243,099 pounds of used sharps have been reported as collected through this program.

To view the list of alternative collection sites please visit the NYSDOH website or go to: <http://www.health.ny.gov/sharps-collection>. There is an application process for becoming part of this program. Participating organizations are required to comply with State and local hazardous waste regulations. To obtain the application visit: <http://www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-4275.pdf>