



# The Infectious Disease Elimination Act: Working to Eliminate Infectious Diseases in Florida

## HIV and hepatitis C burden in Florida

HIV diagnoses have been gradually increasing in Florida since 2013. Over the past 5 years (2014–2018), HIV diagnoses among people who inject drugs (PWID) have increased by 10%.<sup>1</sup> Reported acute hepatitis C cases have increased by more than 160% over the same time period. New hepatitis C cases are often associated with drug use and sharing injection drug equipment.<sup>2</sup>

## Infectious Disease Elimination Act (IDEA)

IDEA, section 381.0038(4), Florida Statutes,<sup>3</sup> was passed in 2016 and amended in 2019 to allow county commissions to authorize syringe exchange programs (SEPs) in their county by way of county ordinance. IDEA exchange programs are to provide one-to-one syringe exchange as well as wrap around services to prevent disease transmission. County commissions must contract with one of the following entities to operate the program: a licensed hospital, a licensed health care clinic, an accredited medical school in Florida, a licensed addictions receiving facility, or a 501(c)3 HIV/AIDS service organization. The Department of Health will collect data from these programs and provide consultation to the county commission for the operation of the program.

## What are SEPs?

SEPs, also referred to as syringe services programs (SSPs) or needle exchange programs (NEPs), are community-based services that provide comprehensive resources in nonjudgmental environments to people who inject drugs or other medications. Studies show SEPs can significantly reduce overdose-related deaths and prevent infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis B and C.<sup>4</sup>

## HIV and hepatitis C in Florida, 2014–2018

**1,522**

of the **23,650** (6%) adult (age 13+) persons who received an **HIV** diagnosis were PWID.<sup>\*1</sup>

**1,024**

of the **10,357** (10%) adult persons who received an **AIDS** diagnosis were PWID.<sup>\*1</sup>

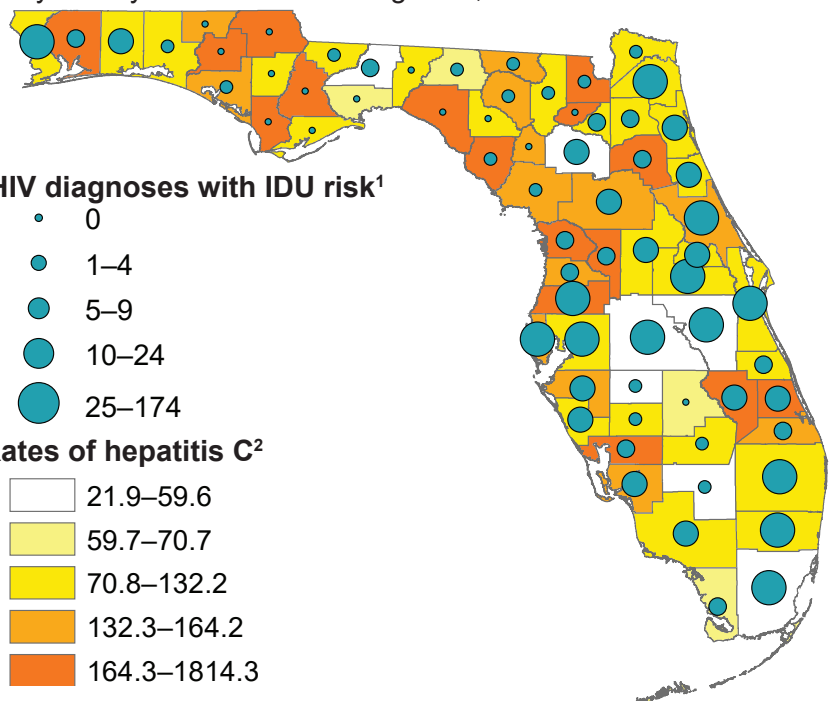
**48,380**

acute and chronic hepatitis C cases among persons less than 40 years old were reported. 955 were acute hepatitis C cases, of which 151 (16%) had documented injection drug use (IDU) in the previous six months.<sup>\*\*2</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>HIV/AIDS diagnoses include PWID who also had male-to-male sexual contact as a mode of HIV exposure, which represented 34% of these diagnoses. <sup>\*\*</sup>Acute hepatitis C cases with reported IDU may also have other reported risk factors. Risk is not reported for chronic hepatitis C, and IDU risk was unknown or unreported for 691 (72%) of acute hepatitis C cases. An individual can be reported as an acute and chronic hepatitis case during the 5-year time period.

## HIV diagnoses with reported IDU and hepatitis C cases vary by county

The map below shows the number of HIV diagnoses with IDU as a reported risk and the 5-year average rate per 100,000 population of acute and chronic hepatitis C cases among persons <40 years old by county of residence at diagnosis, 2014–2018.



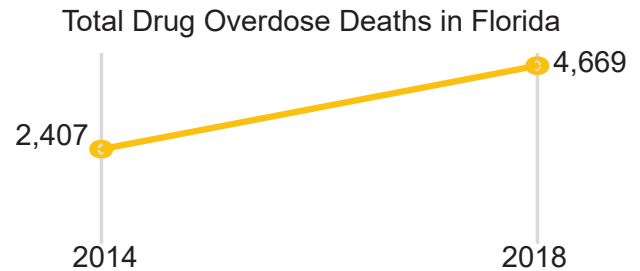
## Data Sources

- HIV Data from Florida Department of Health (DOH), HIV/AIDS Section. Data as of 6/30/2019.
- Hepatitis data from DOH, Hepatitis Section. Data as of 1/31/2020. Hepatitis data by calendar year in this factsheet may differ from data available on Florida CHARTS or other reports using report year.
- Infectious Disease Elimination Act (IDEA), section 381.0038(4), Florida Statutes (2019). Retrieved from: [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0300-0399/0381/Sections/0381.0038.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0300-0399/0381/Sections/0381.0038.html)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2019). Summary of information on the safety and effectiveness of SSPs. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/ssp/syringe-services-programs-summary.html>

## SEPs can reduce overdose deaths

Florida could benefit from a reduction in overdose deaths. Florida observed an 87% increase in total drug overdose deaths from 2014 to 2018.

SEPs offer education about overdose prevention and safer injection practices. They also provide access to naloxone, the overdose reversal medication.



## SEPs can reduce costs related to providing public health and safety services

The risk of acquiring blood-borne diseases like HIV and hepatitis C can be substantially reduced when sterile needles, syringes, and works are used for every injection. By reducing disease transmission, SEPs can save health care costs.<sup>5</sup>

The lifetime cost of treating an individual living with hepatitis C is estimated at nearly \$65,000,<sup>6</sup> and the lifetime cost of treating a person living with HIV is between \$326,500 and \$435,200;<sup>7</sup> a sterile syringe can cost less than a dollar.



## IDEA SEPs in Florida may offer the following services:



Free one-to-one exchange of syringes and safe disposal of used equipment



Viral hepatitis and HIV testing, treatment, and prevention



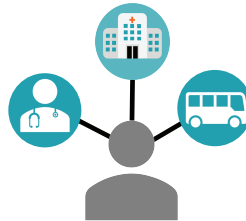
Overdose prevention and harm reduction



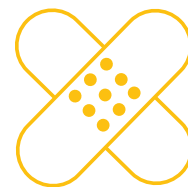
Referral to substance use treatment programs



Vaccinations, including for hepatitis A and B



Referral to social, mental health, and medical services



Abscess and wound care

## Naloxone Locator

Naloxone, the overdose reversal medication, is free and available to individuals who are at risk of experiencing an opioid overdose.

To find a naloxone kit provider, visit <http://isavefl.com/locator.shtml>

## Substance Use Hotline

For free and confidential information in English and Spanish for individuals facing substance use and mental health issues, call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

## HIV/AIDS Resources

For information on HIV/AIDS, call or visit  
1-800-FLA-AIDS (352-2437) English  
1-800-545-SIDA (545-7432) Spanish  
1-800-AIDS-101 (243-7101) Haitian Creole  
1-800-503-7118 Hearing/Speech Impaired  
[www.211bigbend.org/flhivaidshotline](http://www.211bigbend.org/flhivaidshotline)  
Text 'FLHIV' or 'flhiv' to 898211

For more information visit [floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/idea/index.html](http://floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/idea/index.html) or email [SEPinfo@flhealth.gov](mailto:SEPinfo@flhealth.gov)

## Data Sources

5.CDC. (2019). What Are SSPs Factsheet. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/ssp/index.html>

6.Razavi, et al. (2013). Chronic HCV Disease Burden and Cost in the U.S. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23280550>

7.Schackman, et al. (2016). The Lifetime Medical Cost Savings from Preventing HIV in the U.S. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4359630/>

Published April 2020