



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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File #: 20-2397A, Version: 1

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### **Subject:**

Ordinance establishing Chapter 42, Article XV, Pinellas County Code relating to an Infectious Disease Elimination program including syringe exchange, providing program definitions, requirements, and operational guidelines.

### **Recommended Action:**

Conduct a public hearing and adopt the proposed ordinance establishing Chapter 42, Article XV, Pinellas County Code for an Infectious Disease Elimination (IDEA) program including syringe exchange, providing program definitions, requirements, and operational guidelines.

- The Florida Legislature approved IDEA, Section 381.0038(4), Florida Statutes, effective July 1, 2019 authorizing counties to establish programs for sterile syringe exchange in order to prevent and eliminate infectious disease.
- Complicated by the current opioid crisis, areas in Florida have seen outbreaks in hepatitis and a growing concern on the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- Across Florida, reported hepatitis A cases increased from 548 cases in 2018 to 3,408 cases in 2019. Additionally, a review by the Centers of Disease Control in June 2019 showed Pinellas County on a list of 48 counties across the United States that made up more than 50% of new HIV cases (data analyzed from 2016 and 2017).
- Syringe exchanges, coupled with counseling, engagement, and service referrals, have been found to be highly effective at combatting the spread of infectious diseases.
- IDEA requires local authorization for a syringe exchange by county ordinance.
- In addition to establishing the ordinance, Pinellas County must then enter into a letter of agreement with the Florida Department of Health, engage the local health department for advice and recommendations, and procure a designated entity for its operation.
- No state, county, or municipal funds may be used to operate the exchange.

### **Strategic Plan:**

Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

2.1 Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protective services to ensure a safe and secure community

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

5.3 Ensure effective and efficient delivery of county services and support

5.4 Strive to exceed customer expectations

### **Summary:**

Syringe exchanges, coupled with counseling, engagement, and service referrals, have been found to be highly effective at combatting the spread of infectious diseases. The Florida Legislature approved

the Infectious Disease Elimination Act (IDEA), Section 381.0038(4), Florida Statutes, effective July 1, 2019 authorizing counties to establish programs for sterile syringe exchange in order to prevent and eliminate infectious disease.

Local exchanges must be authorized by county ordinance. Following an established ordinance, IDEA requires counties to enter into a letter of agreement with the Florida Department of Health, engage the local health department for advice and recommendations, and procure a designated entity for its operation.

Possible designated entities for operation include:

- 1) hospital licensed under Chapter 395
- 2) health care clinic licensed under Part X of Chapter 400
- 3) medical school in Florida with specific accreditations
- 4) licensed addiction receiving facility defined in FS 397.311
- 5) 501(c)(3) HIV/AIDS service organization.

Exchange programs must submit a defined report to the Florida Department of Health and the Board of County Commissioners (Board) by August 1 each year.

**Background Information:**

Effective July 1, 2019, IDEA was established to allow additional Florida counties to implement syringe exchanges to help prevent and eliminate infectious disease. All syringe exchange programs must: 1) develop an oversight and accountability system with Board approval to ensure compliance before commencing operation, 2) operate a one-to-one exchange for syringes, 3) offer educational materials on HIV, hepatitis, and blood-borne diseases, 4) provide on-site counseling and referrals for drug abuse prevention, education, and treatment as well as screening or referrals for HIV and hepatitis, 5) provide emergency opioid overdose treatment kit or referral to program.

Since IDEA went into effect on July 1, 2019, several counties have begun review and implementation of syringe exchanges including, but not limited to Palm Beach County, Hillsborough County, Manatee County, and Lee County.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Human Services anticipates that this proposed ordinance will require limited additional staff time. This includes establishing and maintaining required agreements, monitoring, and ensuring compliance.

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Daisy Rodriguez, Director, Human Services

**Partners:**

Florida Department of Health in Pinellas  
Local health and behavioral health providers  
Law Enforcement Agencies  
Local Consumers

**Attachments:**

Proposed Infectious Disease Elimination Program Ordinance

Notice of Public Hearing  
Syringe Exchange DOH Letter of Agreement Example  
Florida Syringe Exchange Infographic  
Florida Syringe Exchange Resources  
Florida Syringe Exchange Talking Points