



AIDS Connecticut

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**Press Release
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AIDS Connecticut First Syringe Services Programs in State to Distribute Naloxone

Yesterday, February 23, 2015, AIDS Connecticut, Inc. (ACT), based in Hartford, became the first Syringe Services Program (SSP) in Connecticut to begin distributing Naloxone to SSP clients. Naloxone, a life-saving medication, can be administered to reverse an opioid overdose.

The program has the full backing of the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) “This is a long time coming and we are very excited to be finally implementing a community-based initiative with our HIV prevention partners, such as ACT. The DPH’s Overdose Prevention Education and Naloxone (OPEN) Access CT initiative will begin the pilot with ACT and SSPs to provide statewide training, education, informational resources and Naloxone distribution for people who access our SSPs across the state,” says DPH Health Program Supervisor, Marianne Buchelli. “Connecticut has been making good headway in terms of solid public policy over the last few years to increase access to Naloxone. Community distribution through the SSP is one more step in the right direction,” adds AIDS Connecticut Deputy Director Shawn Lang

ACT has two syringe service sites: One mobile unit in Hartford and one fixed-site at the No Freeze Shelter in Willimantic. Both sites will be providing overdose education, education on how to administer Naloxone and attend to someone who is experiencing an overdose, and kits that contain Naloxone and other supplies.

ACT exchanges over 150,000 clean syringes to hundreds of clients from the Greater Hartford and Windham areas and beyond every year. The programs also offer overdose education, safer sex education and supplies, HIV testing and referrals. ACT has been offering syringe services in the Hartford area for 20 years and recently expanded to the Willimantic area in 2014. For more information, including SSP hours, please visit <http://www.aids-ct.org/sep.html>.