



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY SYRINGE REDEMPTION PROGRAM IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

WHEREAS: The Community Syringe Redemption Program is a needle exchange program that collected thousands of used needles daily, but due to lack of funding, the program was eliminated by the Boston Public Health Commission in FY25; *and*

WHEREAS: The Community Syringe Redemption Program offered small cash payments to those who brought in used needles. It took in 1.8 million syringes last year, which accounts for more than half of the total needle collection volume in Boston. On the last day of the program in June, it took in 4,725 syringes in an hour and a half from more than 70 people. Since its launch in 2020, the program has collected about 5 million needles; *and*

WHEREAS: These numbers show just how impactful this program was, and without it, our residents are now concerned that they will see a dramatic increase in used needles in playgrounds, parks, and neighborhoods, which poses a public health and safety risk to our children and families; *and*

WHEREAS: The BPHC is now in the process of building another needles collection program that would include workforce development, and the City's Mobile Sharps Team will continue needle cleanup. But the new program may have a higher barrier for people to participate, and it may be difficult to fill the void that the Community Syringe Redemption Program left in the meantime; *and*

WHEREAS: It is clear that the Community Syringe Redemption Program helped to keep our neighborhoods safe and clean, and was a great tool in maintaining the public health in our city; *and*

WHEREAS: It is therefore important that the BPHC do all that it can to continue this needle exchange program, especially as we continue to address substance abuse disorders, and Boston saw a 7 percent increase in opioid-related deaths in the in 2023 from the year before; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Boston City Council voices its support for the Community Syringe Redemption Program, and requests that the Boston Public Health Commission do all that it can to reinstate this program.

Filed in Council: July 10, 2024