



New Needle Exchanges Set to Open in Ohio and Northern Kentucky

The programs hope to counter a recent spike in HIV and hepatitis C cases linked to injection drug use.

March 7, 2018 By [Trent Straube](#)

Needle exchange programs are opening in Ohio and northern Kentucky in an effort to stem the rise in HIV and hepatitis C cases resulting from injection drug use, [reports Cincinnatti.com](#), part of the USA Today network.

Specifically, a Hamilton County Exchange Project medical vehicle will be in operation from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. each Thursday at the Mercy Health Clermont Hospital campus in Batavia, Ohio, about 20 miles from Cincinnati. And a similar vehicle from the Northern Kentucky Health Department's Syringe Access/Exchange Program will soon set up in a parking lot at St. Elizabeth's Urgent Care.

"We have seen a 40 percent increase in hepatitis C and a 27 percent increase in HIV cases over the last five years," Julianne Nesbit, the Clermont County health commissioner, told [Cincinnatti.com](#), adding that a local survey found that 75 percent of respondents were in favor of the syringe exchange.

As was reported in an earlier [POZ newsfeed item](#), the number of people who inject drugs and who also tested positive for HIV in northern Kentucky more than tripled from 2016 and 2017. The numbers may seem small—from 5 to 18 people—but officials fear that the trend could indicate much larger numbers of undiagnosed cases.

Similarly, Hamilton County, home to Cincinnati and across the Ohio River from northern Kentucky, saw a total of 184 HIV cases last year, amounting to a 34 percent jump from 2016.

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