Safe Injection Pamphlet for New York City Drug Users Raises Controversy

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The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene created its “Take Charge, Take Care: 10 Tips for Safer Use” harm reduction pamphlet for injection drug users in 2007, but the brochure has come under fire recently, with critics claiming it promotes illicit activity, CNN reports.

“Heroin use is at epidemic levels in New York, and we should be spending money to address that, not teach first-timers how to use,” said New York City Councilman Peter F. Vallone Jr., chairman of the city council’s Public Safety Committee. He called the pamphlet “an indefensible waste of taxpayer money.”

According to the CNN article, the 16-page booklet features 10 safety tips for injection drug users. One reads, “Use with someone else. If you’re alone and something goes wrong, no one can help.”

The pamphlet also includes information on HIV and hepatitis C testing, depression, emergency contacts and where drug users can find help quitting.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg addressed criticism of the pamphlet on January 4. “The health department does have an interest in—if you’re going to do certain things—to get you to do it as healthily as you possibly can.”

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