Health Officials Respond to Unsafe Injections in Non-Hospital Settings

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In response to a hepatitis outbreak at two Las Vegas endoscopy clinics last year, which was linked to staff reusing syringes and medication vials, *The Wall Street Journal* today examines recent efforts to improve injection practices in health care settings to prevent the spread of blood-borne illnesses such as hepatitis and HIV.

As a result of the Las Vegas outbreak—only one of many similar cases reported in recent years—health officials urged roughly 60,000 patients to get tested for hepatitis and HIV. Lawmakers in Nevada and other states nationwide are developing policies to combat unsafe injections.

“It isn’t that health-care professionals have malicious intent or a desire to shortchange the patient, but they just aren’t thinking all the steps through and understanding how they are putting the patient at risk,” says Evelyn McKnight, who contracted hepatitis C from a reused syringe a few years ago at a private oncology clinic in Nebraska. “It’s really important that we empower patients to ask questions like, ‘Is this a new needle and syringe for me? What about this medication vial? Has it been used before and will it be used after me?’”

According to the article, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is launching a new educational campaign next week under the slogan, One Needle, One Syringe, Only One Time. The CDC says it plans to work closely with non-hospital facilities such as pain clinics, surgery centers, radiology clinics and dialysis centers to emphasize safe-injection procedures as part of the accreditation process for those locations.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/unsafe-injections-hiv-16049-3401