Spike in Heroin Use Spurs AIDS Center to Promote Its Needle Exchange

March 17, 2015

The AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) is boosting awareness of its needle exchange program in an effort to keep HIV and hepatitis C rates from increasing along with the jump in heroin use and needle sharing, according to CBS58.com.

In 2010, the center's program exchanged 1 million needles. Last year, it exchanged 3 million through 15 drop-off sites across the state.

When people get into treatment and off the drugs, their health outcomes will be better if they haven't contracted hepatitis or HIV while using heroin, said Scott Stokes, the director of prevention services at ARCW.

"There have been studies to prove [the needle exchange program] hasn't encouraged injection drug use," Stokes said, "but it does reduce HIV and hepatitis C."

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