Injection Drug Use Harm Reduction Practices in Powell, WY

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PURPOSE

• Investigate the community perspective in Powell, WY regarding injection drug use harm reduction strategies.
• Develop a strategy to introduce injection drug use harm reduction programs.

BACKGROUND

• Overdose death from injection heroin use rose 286% from 2002 to 2013.
• Increase of incidence of nationally reported HCV cases rose 258% from 2007 to 2014.
• Injection drug use demographics are no longer poor, urban, non-white.
• Rural communities are not experienced in handling blood borne pathogen outbreaks and provide little in harm reduction strategies.
• Conservative, rural communities present initial resistance to harm reduction strategies.

METHODS

• Assessed injection drug use harm reduction resources available in Powell, WY.
• Spoke with community members regarding injection drug use harm reduction strategies.
• Performed literature review regarding injection drug use harm reduction strategies in rural communities.
• Safe sharp drop programs, needle and syringe exchange programs, and substance abuse counseling were shown to be effective in rural communities.

RESULTS

• Met with key stakeholders – community members, police officers, public health nurses, and an injection drug user.
• Literature review of harm reduction strategies that may be of use was provided to the Powell Branch of Wyoming Department of Health.
• Provided a possible strategy of sequentially initiating harm reduction strategies in Powell, WY – including safe sharp drop box, community education, and needle and syringe exchange programs.
• Suggested the assessment of community feelings regarding harm reduction strategies through the use of a survey.
• Continuing to survey community perspective throughout the initiation of harm reduction strategies.

DISCUSSION

• Brought injection drug use harm reduction strategies to the community’s attention.
• Funding and personnel are limiting factors.
• Possibly organize survey and safe sharp disposal program during future WRITE experience.
• Continue to work to reduce risk of injection drug use in rural Wyoming.

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