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# PUBLIC COMMENT REQUEST

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<b>Today's Date:</b> 05/15/2020	<b>Requested Board Date:</b> 05/19/2020
<b>Requestor Name:</b> Xan Nowakowski	<b>Phone:</b> (850) 320-2240
<b>Address:</b> 6032 Raleigh St #2204 Orlando	<b>Email:</b> xan.nowakowski@gmail.com
<b>Previous Contact with Orange County Staff (If Any) Regarding This Matter (Name/Department):</b>	
<b>Submitted By:</b> Xan Nowakowski	
<b>Comment:</b> Orange County can and should become a leader on needle exchange for other communities in Florida to emulate. Needle exchange is an evidence based, compassionate, and sustainable approach to community health promotion and disease prevention. Regular and free access to clean needles has been demonstrated to reduce harm from injection drug use, prevent the spread of bloodborne diseases, and help people reduce their drug use over time. Data from communities that have used needle exchange strategies show consistently excellent outcomes on a variety of measures of health, quality of life, and survival. Please make Orange County a model for other areas of Florida by implementing a county-wide needle exchange program!	
<b>Have you received or been promised any compensation or anything else of value, including money or gifts, related to this public comment?</b> No	
<b>Para mayor información en español, por favor llame al (407) 836-3111.</b>	
<b>Attachments:</b>	

**Deliver To:**  
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County Administration Bldg. 3rd Floor,  
201 S. Rosalind Ave.  
Orlando, FL 32801

**Or Mail To:**  
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<b>Today's Date:</b> 05/18/2020	<b>Requested Board Date:</b> 05/19/2020
<b>Requestor Name:</b> Maxwell Droznin	<b>Phone:</b> (978) 430-0295
<b>Address:</b> 7004 Tavistock Lakes Blvd Unit 1005 Orlando, FL 32827	<b>Email:</b> mdroznin@knights.ucf.edu
<b>Previous Contact with Orange County Staff (If Any) Regarding This Matter (Name/Department):</b>	
<b>Submitted By:</b> Maxwell Droznin	
<b>Comment:</b> <p>As someone who has studied and worked within the public health realm of Central Florida and now studies to be a Doctor of Medicine, I believe that a Syringe Exchange Program in Orange County will not only protect the health of those using injection drugs, but will positively impact the health of the general population as a whole. As I am sure all of you are painfully aware, the opioid epidemic in the United States has hit Central Florida particularly hard. This not only has resulted in hundreds of opioid related deaths in Orange County but has likely caused the spread of thousands of additional HIV, Hepatitis C, and other blood-borne infections through the sharing of needles. This plague of infections directly threatens and decreases the quality of life of those who contract it through sharing needles. Additionally, these infections have the potential to rapidly spread throughout the general population through interactions with needle users. The cost of ignoring the damage done through this mode of transmission could usher in a larger HIV and Hepatitis C outbreak in Central Florida, and lead to even more preventable deaths than those caused by the opioid drugs themselves. Thankfully, a solution to this grave public health threat is at hand. Many studies in the United States and other countries have found that Syringe Exchange Programs are extremely cost-effective. They have been shown to reduce, and potentially eliminate, the spread of blood-borne diseases between injection drug users. With the average lifetime cost of Hepatitis C treatment around \$64,000, and HIV treatment around \$380,000, Syringe Exchange Programs can not only save lives, but also millions of taxpayer dollars. Finally, COVID-19 has demonstrated how crucial it is to reduce the burden on our healthcare system, and this is an intelligent and thoughtful method of doing so. The passing of this ordinance is not only necessary to ensure the health of Orange County's population, but an opportunity to support our healthcare system and help save taxpayer dollars during difficult and unprecedented times. Thank you, Maxwell Droznin, MPH Prevention Night Manager, Chapman Compassionate Care UCF College of Medicine Class of 2023</p>	
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<b>Today's Date:</b> 05/17/2020	<b>Requested Board Date:</b> 05/19/2020
<b>Requestor Name:</b> Ian Motie	<b>Phone:</b> (407) 590-6234
<b>Address:</b> 251 Calliope Street Ocoee, FL, 34761	<b>Email:</b> ikm12@med.fsu.edu
<b>Previous Contact with Orange County Staff (If Any) Regarding This Matter (Name/Department):</b>	
<b>Submitted By:</b> Ian Motie	
<b>Comment:</b> In the year since the Florida legislature approved the IDEA Exchange Bill of 2019, many counties have followed the success of Miami's needle exchange programs to enact programs of their own. It has been rewarding spending my nearly four years of medical school advocating for the statewide expansion of these programs and the incredible progress that the state of Florida has made. Today, there is an opportunity for Orange County to join the other Florida counties that have taken the evidence-based measures to protect our underserved populations. Needle exchange programs have been touted by the public health community for their efficacy in reducing the transmission of infectious diseases and abating the amount of opioid overdose-related deaths by distributing Naloxone. The Miami IDEA Exchange has been a brilliant model of all the great things a needle exchange can do, limited not only to exchanging needles and distributing naloxone, but also testing for infectious diseases, referring to outreach programs, and many other services. Despite being an epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Miami IDEA Exchange program has even found additional ways to serve their at-risk populations as COVID-19 further exploits their vulnerabilities. The Miami IDEA Exchange and the leadership of Dr. Hansel Tookes has illustrated the wonderful potential that needle exchange programs can be capable of. In short, it has been inspirational seeing how something as basic as a needle exchange has helped elevate an entire community. As students at FSU College of Medicine, we learn our school's mission statement on our very first day which places an emphasis on responding to community needs through service to underserved populations. I have spent my clinical years learning in the medical communities of Orange County and have seen these unmet needs and felt my patients' suffering. However, I have recognized the incredible potential that providing harm reduction services could do for these individuals. This is an opportunity to protect the public health of our community and create access to care for marginalized populations in which access does not exist, and we can start taking the first steps by adopting the intervention of needle exchange.	
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<b>Today's Date:</b> 05/13/2020	<b>Requested Board Date:</b> 05/19/2020
<b>Requestor Name:</b> Josh Salzman	<b>Phone:</b> (407) 595-4822
<b>Address:</b> 8147 Upper Perse Circle Orlando	<b>Email:</b> salzmanjo@gmail.com
<b>Previous Contact with Orange County Staff (If Any) Regarding This Matter (Name/Department):</b> FL	
<b>Submitted By:</b> Josh Salzman	
<b>Comment:</b> I am a second year medical student at UCF writing this comment. Opioid Use Disorder is national public health crisis that is currently rising-especially in Orange County. Opioid use disorder should be reflected as it is in the current literature as a psychiatric, treatable condition supported by evidenced-based interventions in pharmacotherapy, counseling, case management, and the intervention at various social determinants of health. People who inject drugs (PWID) lose their families, homes, livelihood and potentially their lives. The personal burdens carried by these individuals have profound impacts on public health and health care spending. The spread of blood-borne infections (e.g. HIV, Hepatitis B/C, etc.) is purported largely by the reuse and sharing of needles. Syringe services programs (SSP) or needle exchanges combat this public health crisis by exchanging used, contaminated needles for sterile ones. In addition to the exchange, clinics provide free blood test screenings for these blood-borne diseases as well as treatment for these diseases. Reused needles carrying bacteria which cause abscesses at the injection site; this accounts for fatal cases of sudden cardiac death. These clinics also offer subsequent medical care, and education about safe injection practices to prevent these occurrences. Last, at the pace of the needle exchange participants, many can opt to initiate medication-assisted treatment (e.g. methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone) to manage their disorder and begin a path to recovery. These treatments are proven to show cessation IV drug use, decreased mortality from overdose events, and promote re-integration into society on each participants' unique path to recovery. IV drug use is a complex issue. Our main concern is the health and safety of the public. We need needle exchange clinics to help PWID regain control of their lives and reduce the rates of HIV, HCV, and HBV in our community. If we choose to allow needle exchange clinics in Orange County, we will not see a rise in use, but a massive return on investment. We will see a decreased burden on prisons, decreased burden on emergency rooms, decreased mortality, and—most importantly, an avenue for which PWID to feel accounted.	
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<b>Para mayor información en español, por favor llame al (407) 836-3111.</b>	
<b>Attachments:</b>  Miami Needle Exchaneg Clinic Article_5-13-2020 4-12-33 PM.pdf Miami Needle Exchnage Article 2_5-13-2020 4-12-33 PM.pdf	

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<b>Today's Date:</b> 05/18/2020	<b>Requested Board Date:</b> 05/19/2020
<b>Requestor Name:</b> Alexander Gartland	<b>Phone:</b> (919) 996-9109
<b>Address:</b> 8613 Dufferin Lane Orlando	<b>Email:</b> alex.j.gartland@knights.ucf.edu
<b>Previous Contact with Orange County Staff (If Any) Regarding This Matter (Name/Department):</b> Florida	
<b>Submitted By:</b> Alex Gartland	
<b>Comment:</b> My name is Alex Gartland, a 3rd year medical student at the UCF College of Medicine. Since starting my medical training at UCF, I have spent much of my time helping coordinate community service efforts to benefit the greater Orlando Community. Having worked closely with many of the underserved groups here in Orlando I believe starting a Syringe Exchange Program is of the utmost importance. This was where I began to see the importance of Harm Reduction Programs, as they dramatically alter the number of new HIV infections, help link people into care, and are economically beneficial to the community as these programs have been shown to save lifetime costs of over \$400,000 per HIV case prevented and nearly \$20,000 per each Hepatitis C case prevented. Orange County now has the 2nd highest incidence of HIV in the State and it is time to begin combating this growing problem. During my first two years of medical school I became involved in helping establish the Chapman Skin and Wound Care Clinic for the homeless in downtown Orlando. Over the past year we have provided care to over a hundred patients as well as working with the DOH to provide Hepatitis A vaccinations to vulnerable populations. I am proud of the work we've accomplished but it has opened my eyes to how much work needs to be done. I believe that within the context of the Opioid Epidemic it is vital that we take heed of the success in Miami-Dade and follow many other Florida counties in beginning a Needle Exchange Program here in Orange. The success of Miami's pilot IDEA Exchange showed that this intervention was indeed effective at reducing HIV transmission, successfully getting program participants into treatment centers, and, most importantly, preventing the loss of life from fatal opioid overdoses. As a UCF medical student, we are ready to step up to the name of "Orlando's Hometown Team" and want to be granted to opportunity to provide the best care we can to our community. I implore you to see that that the opioid epidemic continues to exploit the at-risk population of Orange County, and that we can address this crisis through harm reduction intervention by allowing for a needle exchange program in Orange County.	
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<b>Today's Date:</b> 05/18/2020	<b>Requested Board Date:</b> 05/19/2020
<b>Requestor Name:</b> AJ Rathakrishnan	<b>Phone:</b> (407) 619-8325
<b>Address:</b> 1554 Cranston Street Winter Springs, Florida, 32708	<b>Email:</b> avr16@med.fsu.edu
<b>Previous Contact with Orange County Staff (If Any) Regarding This Matter (Name/Department):</b>	
<b>Submitted By:</b> AJ Rathakrishnan	
<b>Comment:</b> The Needle Exchange Program (NEP) is a necessary and lifesaving public health measure we can enact to save not only lives, but millions of dollars in healthcare expenses as well. Also, we often think of 'addicts' in a negative manner, when in reality, they are actually struggling with a very real, well known side effect of a certain medication. This effect can be debilitating, and anything we can do to provide more structure can lead not only to increased safety measures, but also access to additional support in their journey to overcome their addiction. Since the implementation of the NEP in certain counties in Florida, there has been a decrease in opioid-caused deaths in those counties. The data is clear; providing a safe environment for people to exchange their needles and get safer ones reduces the risk of death and transmission of diseases, such as HIV. A recent report showed that the Orlando region ranks 2nd for new HIV diagnoses among large US cities. People living with HIV can unknowingly pass the disease on to someone else by letting someone use a needle they had just used. A major way to reduce new HIV diagnoses is to implement the NEP. As a 3rd year medical student at the Florida State University College of Medicine rotating in Orlando, I see how sometimes health inequities can affect people, but also affect the healthcare system. Even now, enduring one of the greatest pandemics the world has ever seen has shown how much healthcare can cost, how insurance companies play a role, and the effect lack of proper equipment can have. Opioid overdoses and new HIV infections caused from dirty needle exchanges can be taxing on the system, and result in unnecessary spending that could otherwise be used or saved. Lastly, the stigma around being an 'addict' can start to be removed if we have accept the NEP. A classmate of mine from high school recently passed away due to overdosing on opioids, and I wonder if she would've been able to find help if the NEP was in place.	
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<b>Today's Date:</b> 05/18/2020	<b>Requested Board Date:</b> 05/19/2020
<b>Requestor Name:</b> Carrie Pope	<b>Phone:</b> (844) 234-7800
<b>Address:</b> 522 S. Hunt Club Blvd. #412 Apopka, FL 32703	<b>Email:</b> carrie@pscfl.org
<b>Previous Contact with Orange County Staff (If Any) Regarding This Matter (Name/Department):</b>	
<b>Submitted By:</b> Carrie Pope	
<b>Comment:</b> The Physicians Society of Central Florida (PSCF) is extremely pleased to support the enactment of proposed Orange County Code, Article VIII, Chapter 20, pertaining to Needle and Syringe Exchange Program in Orange County, Florida. The Florida Medical Association and component County Medical Societies across the State have long supported the adoption of needle exchange programs as a data-driven solution for addressing the opioid crisis, lowering HIV and Hepatitis C transmission rates, and lowering overall health care costs for treatment of this patient population. A wealth of data has been published by the Infectious Disease Elimination Act (IDEA) Program at the University of Miami that shows the beneficial impact that a similar program could have on our community. One scientific paper authored by Dr. Hansel Tookes at the University of Miami examined the relationship between needle exchange programs and decreases in overdose related hospitalizations and found "a significant decrease in overdose-associated admissions among People Who Inject Opioids at a county safety-net hospital following the implementation of the IDEA-SSP in the setting of the contemporary Florida overdose crisis". Read the paper: Hospital admissions among people who inject opioids following syringe services program implementation Also, according to the Centers for Disease Control, Syringe Exchange Programs are also proven to be a cost-saving preventive intervention, saving the healthcare system over \$400,000 for a lifetime of HIV medications, \$94,000 for one course of the new Hepatitis C medications, and Jackson Memorial Hospital \$11.4 million in healthcare costs associated with People Who Inject Drugs in one year (while only spending \$0.9 cents per syringe). It is without hesitation that our organization encourages the Orange County Board of County Commissioners to adopt the Needle and Syringe Exchange Program. Carrie Pope Managing Director Physicians Society of Central Florida	
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<b>Today's Date:</b> 05/18/2020	<b>Requested Board Date:</b> 05/19/2020
<b>Requestor Name:</b> Ryan Hall	<b>Phone:</b> (407) 322-8199
<b>Address:</b> 2500 west lake mary blvd suite 219 lake mary	<b>Email:</b> dr.rcwhall@live.com
<b>Previous Contact with Orange County Staff (If Any) Regarding This Matter (Name/Department):</b> Florida	
<b>Submitted By:</b> Ryan Hall	
<b>Comment:</b> I had been hoping to testify in person but due to a scheduling conflict I was not able to, for which I apologizes. As the Current President of the Physician Society of Central Florida, I am in support of Orange County developing a needle exchange program. Similar programs in other parts of Florida and the country have been shown to reduce bloodborne diseases, improve over all health and safety of the communities in which they are available, and potentially even help to reduce substances use by facilitating contact between people with substances abuse concerns and the medical community eventually leading to substance use treatment. Thank you for your time and consideration of this public comment The following articles help to support these statements 1. Treatment initiation strategies for syringe exchange referrals to methadone maintenance: A randomized clinical trial. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2018 Jun 1;187:343-350. 2. Decreased Odds of Injection Risk Behavior Associated With Direct Versus Indirect Use of Syringe Exchange: Evidence From Two California Cities. Subst Use Misuse. 2017 Jul 29;52(9):1151-1159. 3. Needle syringe programmes and opioid substitution therapy for preventing hepatitis C transmission in people who inject drugs. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2017 Sep 18;9: 4. Effectiveness of structural-level needle/syringe programs to reduce HCV and HIV infection among people who inject drugs: a systematic review. AIDS Behav. 2013 Nov;17(9):2878-92.	
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