

By: Ortiz, Jr.

H.B. No. 1846

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to disease control programs to reduce the risk of certain communicable diseases.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 81, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Subchapter J to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. PROGRAMS TO REDUCE RISK

OF CERTAIN COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Sec. 81.401. DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAMS. (a) A local health authority or an organization that contracts with a local governmental entity may establish a disease control program that:

(1) provides for the anonymous exchange of used hypodermic needles and syringes for an equal number of new hypodermic needles and syringes;

(2) offers education, in both English and Spanish, on the transmission and prevention of communicable diseases, including HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C;

(3) assists program participants in obtaining health-related services, including tests for HIV and hepatitis C, substance abuse treatment, and abscess care; and

(4) provides proper medical waste containers and information in English and Spanish on the safe disposal of syringes, including local disposal locations.

(b) A local health authority or other organization

1 operating a disease control program authorized by this subchapter  
2 may charge a participant in the program a fee for each hypodermic  
3 needle or syringe used in the program not to exceed 150 percent of  
4 the actual cost of the hypodermic needle or syringe.

5 (c) A local health authority or other organization  
6 operating a disease control program authorized by this subchapter  
7 shall annually provide the department with information on the  
8 effectiveness of the program and its impact on reducing the spread  
9 of communicable diseases, including HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis  
10 C.

11 Sec. 81.402. DISTRIBUTION OF NEEDLES AND SYRINGES TO  
12 PROGRAM. A person licensed as a wholesale drug distributor or  
13 device distributor under Chapter 431 may distribute hypodermic  
14 needles and syringes to a disease control program authorized by  
15 this subchapter.

16 Sec. 81.403. HANDLING OF NEEDLES AND SYRINGES. (a) The  
17 operator of a disease control program shall store hypodermic  
18 needles and syringes in a proper and secure manner. Only authorized  
19 employees or volunteers of the disease control program may have  
20 access to the hypodermic needles and syringes. Program clients may  
21 obtain hypodermic needles and syringes only from an authorized  
22 employee or volunteer.

23 (b) The operator of a disease control program authorized by  
24 this subchapter shall store and dispose of used hypodermic needles  
25 and syringes in accordance with board rule.

26 SECTION 2. Section 481.125, Health and Safety Code, is  
27 amended by adding Subsection (g) to read as follows:

1       (g) It is an exception to the application of Subsections (a)  
2 and (b) that:

3           (1) the person manufactures hypodermic needles or  
4 syringes that are delivered or are to be delivered through a disease  
5 control program established under Subchapter J, Chapter 81; or

6           (2) the person:

7               (A) uses, possesses, or delivers hypodermic  
8 needles or syringes that are delivered or are to be delivered  
9 through a disease control program established under Subchapter J,  
10 Chapter 81; and

11               (B) presents evidence showing that the person is  
12 an employee, volunteer, or participant of the disease control  
13 program.

14       SECTION 3. The purpose of this Act is to authorize disease  
15 control programs to combat the spread of infectious and  
16 communicable diseases, including HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

17       SECTION 4. (a) The change to Section 481.125, Health and  
18 Safety Code, made by this Act applies only to an offense committed  
19 on or after the effective date of this Act. For purposes of this  
20 section, an offense is committed before the effective date of this  
21 Act if any element of the offense occurs before the effective date.

22       (b) An offense committed before the effective date of this  
23 Act is covered by the law in effect when the offense was committed,  
24 and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

25       SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2007.