



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

Patrick S. Blacklock
County Administrator

Beth Gabor
Manager of Public Affairs

625 Court Street, Room 204 • Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 666-8195 • FAX (530) 666-8193
www.yolocounty.org

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Contact: Beth Gabor, Manager of Public Affairs
(530) 666-8042 [w] • (530) 219-8464 [c]

New Law Aims to Prevent the Spread of Blood-Borne Pathogens

(Woodland, CA) – On October 9, 2011, Gov. Brown signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 41, as part of statewide efforts to reduce the spread of HIV, hepatitis C, and other blood-borne pathogens. The new law, which took effect on January 1, 2012, expands legal access to hypodermic needles and syringes in an effort to reduce the sharing of contaminated injection equipment. This change in law comes after evaluation of the results of the Disease Prevention Demonstration Project, a pilot program that Yolo County participated in to assess the long-term desirability of allowing pharmacies to sell nonprescription syringes in order to prevent the spread of blood-borne pathogens, a practice which is standard in most U.S. states.

SB 41 removes restrictions on pharmacy practices to allow nonprescription sale of syringes (NPSS) through licensed pharmacies throughout the state, without requiring they register with a program or local government to authorize NPSS. As of January 1, physicians and pharmacists may furnish or sell up to 30 syringes without a prescription to adults 18 years of age or older for disease prevention purposes. SB 41 also allows adults anywhere in the state to purchase and possess up to 30 syringes for personal use when acquired from an authorized source. California code now specifies that pharmacists, physicians and syringe exchange programs are all authorized sources of nonprescription syringes for disease prevention purposes.

“Yolo County is proud to have been a part of the Disease Prevention Demonstration Project that led to this change in law which ultimately will reduce the spread of blood-borne pathogens such as HIV and hepatitis C,” said Yolo County Health Officer Christian Sandrock, MD, MPH.

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