

## Understanding Injection Sites

Some well-meaning advocates and law makers mistakenly believe that offering a drug user a place indoors to use their preferred drug is helpful and relieves a serious public health issue. These places are sometimes called “safe injection sites,” but in fact this harm reduction strategy tends to hurt those it proposes to help while endangering others. **All cities, counties and countries in the world that have considered opening Injections Sites have stopped pursuing the idea once they better understood the realities.** Even Vancouver, with the only injection site open in the world, stopped all efforts to open more sites when the one failed to achieve important promised results. San Francisco’s state lawmakers were considering this strategy in summer/fall 2018 via Assembly Bill 186. Gratefully, as of this printing, California has abandoned the pursuit of injection sites.

Here is what we know:

**Overdose deaths don’t decline with injections sites – they increase!** We find in Vancouver, with the only injection site open in the world, that overdose deaths have increased from 28 in 2008 to 410 today. \*Verified by NBC-TV

**The area around the Vancouver site, is fraught with drug dealing, crime, homelessness, drug trafficking and serious youth consumption.** \*Verified by NBC-TV

**The public will be in danger as drug users exit the facility.** Some users will be highly agitated, some violent, even psychotic, paranoid and/or schizophrenic. Others will get behind the wheel and drive without hesitation. \*Verified by NBC-TV

**The site would legalize all drugs in San Francisco “de facto.”** Law enforcement would be rendered useless to protect people. Anyone carrying any drug in San Francisco, if caught can claim they *are on their way to the injection site.*

**Drug users do not seek treatment when they are “high.”** It is fantasy to think a government employee will be able to encourage Joe-user to “try this NA program instead of shooting up today.” There is no incentive for drug users to seek treatment at a place that happily facilitates their drug use and addiction - helping expedite their demise.

**In the end, few addicts will even enter a site.** In Vancouver only an estimated 18% of street users go to the injection site. This 18% easily shoot up again at other non-injection site locations. \*Verified by NBC-TV

**One worries that these sites will be opened in neighborhoods that are already disadvantaged and fragile.** More liquor stores and marijuana dispensaries are found in neighborhoods of color than anywhere else. Concentrating more crime and problems caused by addiction in already distressed areas is unconscionable – but likely given history.

\*RMHIDTA

**Injection Sites endangers government workers.** They will be exposed to violent drug-use behavior at the injection site. They will be asked to take on the role of drug dealer. This and other site activities put them specifically in violation of Federal Narcotic Laws – making

government workers susceptible, in a real way, to imprisonment in the federal prison system. These sites also violate international treaties and leave government workers exposed to those consequences as well.

**Injection Sites subjects the State of California as well as local government to tremendous liability** when users die and/or others are killed by users that have recently left the injection site. The federal and international violations these sites represent carry great liability as well.

**If in the medical profession, Injection Sites requires workers to violate their Hippocratic oath.**

**Property values may fall and neighbors may be pushed out in areas where the sites are located.** Severely blighted and depraved, these site locations easily become magnets for drug dealers and the squalor that comes from the homeless population. San Francisco has already devolved from the crown jewel of California to a haven for drug dealers, homeless and open defecation.

#### **Is there an effective alternative solution to consider?**

Dr. Robert Dupont, veteran drugs-of-abuse leader, speaks of failed “harm reduction” efforts in Sweden’s relative to its heroine epidemic. In response to the failure, Sweden pursued a partnership between law enforcement and public health – and they are now having success.

San Francisco and other cities are desperate; they have grave IV drug issues on their streets that hurt tourism, commerce of all kind, neighborhood safety and development, not to mention the human suffering among the IV users themselves and the communities trying to support and/or deal with them.

Understanding this mechanics of this partnership, may be an important step to a real public health initiative that might actually work.

#### ***Below are statements from many California Law Enforcement Units against drug injection sites that are illegal at the Federal level:***

*“... authorize what amounts to little more than county sanctioned shooting galleries.”*

*- [Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs](#), [Association of Deputy District Attorneys](#), [California Association of Code Enforcement Officers](#), [California College & University Police Chiefs Association](#), [California Narcotic Officers Association](#), [Los Angeles County Probation Officers Union](#) [AFSCME Union 685](#), [Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association](#), [Los Angeles Police Protective League](#)*

*“While attempting to create a safe place to use drugs, this bill effectively permits government-sanctioned drug dens where health and other officials will oversee the ‘lawful’ use of controlled substances. This sends entirely the wrong message regarding drug use...”*

*- [California State Sheriffs’ Association](#)*

*“... could be interpreted that an individual who participates in one of these programs could never be arrested for drug possession, even outside of the designated program site.”*

- [California District Attorneys Association](#)

*“For communities to feel safe, drug users and offenders must be pushed to adequate treatment to resolve their dependency... AB 186 will produce an opposite effect, where drug users are given a safe-haven for consumption.”*

- [California Peace Officers Association](#)

*“...we believe that safe injection sites will only encourage and support criminal activity and drug use further.”*

– [Mayor Corey Warshaw, City of West Covina](#)

*“AB 186 which is creating government-sanctioned drug places, raises tremendous liability issues for local governments when participants inevitably overdose, or injure or kill someone else after leaving a program site while still under the influence...”*

- [Office of the District Attorney, Alameda County](#)

*“...it is difficult to truly grasp the idea that enabling people to use drugs and providing them the means to do so, will help those individuals recover from drug addiction or make our communities safe from drug-related crimes.”*

- [Peace Officers Research Association of California](#)

*“AB 186 has the real potential to do continued damage on our most vulnerable communities.”*

– [Bishop Ron Allen, Founder, President, and CEO of International Faith Based Coalition](#)