

National Syringe Services Program Evaluation

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Supporting Statement B

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## **Justification\_**

The primary purpose of the National Syringe Services Program Evaluation (NSSPE) is to administer a national program survey to assess and monitor SSP operational characteristics and services, basic client characteristics, funding resources, community relations, and key operational successes and challenges.

### **1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods**

SSPs listed in a publicly available directory of SSPs in the United States, maintained by a key partner, the North American Syringe Exchange Network (NASEN; <https://nasen.org>), will be contacted and invited to complete the the Dave Purchase Memorial Survey. Currently, there are 400 SSPs in the NASEN directory representing over 225 cities and 44 states and territories (including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands); however we project approximately 600 SSPs in the next couple of years. The most updated NASEN directory of SSPs at the time of project start up, will serve as the respondent universe. The entire respondent universe will be surveyed to enable a broad understanding of current SSP service coverage across the United States, which could not be achieved by surveying a sample of SSPs.

Directors/program managers of SSPs in the United States listed in the NASEN directory will be contacted to complete a survey about their program. SSPs that did not provide any services in the year for which information is being requested will not be contacted.

NASEN will send a letter of invitation by email which provides a description of the survey and instructions for completing the survey. The two options for completing the survey include:

1. The SSP can enter responses to survey questions via a secure, web-based application (e.g. REDCap), for which a survey link will be provided.
2. The SSP can provide responses to survey questions via phone or videoconferencing, using a scheduling link provided to coordinate date and time with a project interviewer.

Program managers will have approximately 3 months to complete the survey, and those who do not complete the survey via the options provided, will receive two to three follow-up reminders to complete the survey. A final reminder will be sent at the end of the data collection period. At this time, those who do not want to participate

in this survey, will be invited to complete one question about why they do not want to participate.

## **2. Procedures for the Collection of Information**

Prior to the completion of the survey, a program manager or staff person designated by the SSP will complete a 35-minute survey called the Dave Purchase Memorial Survey via the options described above. A web-based application like REDCap that allows both self-administered and interviewer-administered survey data collection will be used for all data entry and storage. Specifically, in the first year of survey administration, a short module to capture key metrics for calendar year 2020 will be added to the survey to establish baseline measures; however, this brief 2020 module will be dropped in subsequent years. This has been incorporated into the overall average of 35 minutes to complete the survey. The survey will be administered over the course of approximately 3 months and will be administered annually up to three years.

No direct individual-level identifiers will be collected via the survey (e.g., name, social security number). The main data collection components include basic aggregate client characteristics and program operational characteristics, service delivery, funding resources, community relations, operational successes and challenges, and impact to operations and services due to COVID-19. Respondents may refuse to answer questions or stop participation at any time without penalty.

SSPs will receive up to \$125 with specific amounts determined by the award recipient to encourage participation and increase response rates.

### Quality Control

Data quality will be ensured through project staff training and regular, close monitoring of all operations, data collection, and data entry. The web-based application like REDCap will further improve data quality in several ways:

- a) Interviewer errors are reduced because interviewers do not have to follow complex routing instructions; the computer does the routing or skip patterns for them.
- b) Respondent errors are also reduced. Consistency checks are programmed into the survey so that inconsistent answers or out-of-range values can be corrected or explained while the survey is in progress.
- c) The use of a web-based application can also reduce coding and coding errors, which makes it possible to prepare the data for

analysis faster and with fewer errors.

Data entered into the web-based application will be transmitted directly to a secure, cloud-based server. The award recipient will conduct frequent data quality checks and make adjustments as needed. The survey will include built-in logic checks for key variables. At the conclusion of data collection, the award recipient will clean the full dataset and send a finalized database to CDC.

### **3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Minimize Non-response**

Approximately one month before data collection begins, SSPs will receive a letter or email from NASEN to alert them that the Dave Purchase Memorial Survey is forthcoming. SSPs have a high degree of familiarity with and trust in NASEN as a supportive partner in their ongoing work. A couple of survey modalities will be offered to SSPs as described previously (including an online, self-administered option via a web-based application like REDCap or interviewer-administration via phone or videoconferencing). SSPs may choose the method that they prefer. SSPs that do not respond to the survey will be sent follow-up reminders during the data collection period. Response rates will be monitored through conference calls on a bi-weekly basis by award recipient and CDC, offering the opportunity to share strategies for improving response rates. A token of appreciation of up to \$125 will be provided to SSPs for completing the Dave Purchase Memorial Survey, with specific amounts determined by the award recipient, to encourage participation and increase response rates.

Characteristics of non-responding SSPs, such as geographic region or syringe distribution model (e.g., one-for-one exchange, needs-based), will be monitored and compared with those of responders to determine potential data gaps. The goal is to achieve at least an 80% response rate based on a survey of SSPs conducted in 2013 that used phone and mail responses and achieved a 75% response rate. The addition of an online response method (i.e. REDCap) is intended to make survey response easier and thus potentially increase response rates.

### **4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken**

The Dave Purchase Memorial Survey will focus on methods that are feasible and practical, while ensuring that the approach is scientifically sound. Prior to implementation, CDC and award recipient staff will test the skip patterns and responses of the data collection instruments to ensure a streamlined data collection instrument that

produces valid and reliable data. In addition, the methods and procedures have been informed by previous administrations of a similar survey implemented by Dr. Don Des Jarlais formerly at Mount Sinai Beth Israel and the North American Syringe Exchange Network (NASEN); this survey has not been conducted consistently since 2013 (i.e. only one survey has been conducted since then) thus creating large gap in national data. Moreover, discussions between the awardee, NASEN, and a few SSPs have been completed to enhance the feasibility of the survey.

## **5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data**

### Individual Consultant on Statistical Aspects

The following individuals consulted on statistical aspects:

Amy Baugher, MPH  
Epidemiologist, Data Analysis and Management  
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### Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

The award recipient, staff at the University of Washington (UW), New York University, and NASEN will be responsible for leading the implementation of the survey with SSPs, monitoring data collection, managing incoming data, and analyzing the data.

### UW Project Staff

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