



INFORMATION BULLETIN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 May 1, 2009

NEEDLE EXCHANGE DATA

VICTORIA – The Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) provides regular updates on the number of needles distributed and collected throughout the Greater Victoria area.

Distribution and/or collection of needles are provided by a number of local service providers throughout the community including AIDS Vancouver Island (AVI), Victoria AIDS Resource & Community Service Society (VARCS), the Society of Living Injection Drug Users (SOLID), Prostitutes Empowerment Education and Resource Society (PEERS), VIHA's Cook Street Public Health Unit and the City of Victoria needle drop boxes.

	ALL SERVICE PROVIDERS		AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND	
	Distributed	Recovered	Distributed	Recovered
March 2009	28,000	18,000	21,100	9,100
February 2009	26,100	27,200	17,900	18,200
January 2009	25,100	17,600	16,300	10,100
December 2008	26,500	18,700	14,700	5,900
November 2008	34,400	24,100	24,900	16,500
October 2008	29,800	13,700	22,100	8,000
September 2008	34,200	28,500	24,500	21,600
August 2008	36,500	19,700	27,000	10,700
July 2008	33,400	24,000	25,000	19,000
June 2008	24,700	13,400	16,700	7,500
Monthly Average (Jan-April 2008) *	45,400	36,900	34,900	24,400

* Data for May 2008 was not included because a higher than usual volume of needles were distributed to clients prior to the closure of AVI's fixed site.

Anecdotally, fewer discarded needles are being found on the streets. VIHA continues to closely monitor needle distribution and collection in consultation with the Victoria Service Providers Committee, and will modify the mobile exchange service as needed.

The expanded mobile needle exchange service with AVI was implemented in June 2008 on a one-year trial basis. AVI's mobile service will continue until a location for a fixed site or sites is found that meets the needs of clients and addresses public order issues. This will be done in consultation with the Victoria Needle Exchange Advisory Committee that represents many community

stakeholders including City of Victoria, the Police, downtown businesses, neighborhood groups, inner city churches and schools, and service providers.

Needle exchange services are only one component of a network of harm reduction services that to help prevent the spread of disease. VIHA fully supports a distributed model for needle exchange services that incorporates both mobile and fixed locations throughout Greater Victoria.

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