

Victoria Needle Exchange Services Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

September 2008

Mandate

The mandate of the Victoria Needle Exchange Services Advisory Committee is to provide input and feedback on issues related to policy, program development and the delivery of health and social services by needle exchange programs. This Advisory Committee will endeavor to address the needs and concerns of both the community and service users.

Responsibilities

Reporting to the Director of Public Health, Office of the Medical Health Officer at the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), the Victoria Needle Exchange Advisory Committee shall be responsible for:

- Providing a forum for individuals to raise issues and concerns related to health and social services provided by the needle exchange programs.
- Acting as a liaison between the community and the program.
- Recommending strategies around emerging community issues about needle exchange services.
- Providing advice and guidance on matters pertaining to the operations in the service delivery of needle exchange programs.
- Working together to ensure needle exchange services remains responsive to the needs and concerns of the community and service users.

Organization

The Victoria Needle Exchange Advisory Committee's membership shall reflect geographical interests representing both the downtown and the broader city and the diversity of community interests. Representation will be divided between service users, representatives from local community agencies and members from various community representatives/associations, including business owners. Members of the Committee are accountable to the organizations they represent given the principle of mutual accountability.

The following organizations will be invited to send representation:

- City of Victoria, Social Planning & Housing Division (1 representative)
- Victoria City Police
- Neighbourhood Associations within City of Victoria boundaries
- SOLID (Society of Living Intravenous Drug Users)
- VARCS (Victoria AIDS Resource and Community Service Society)
- AVI Client Advisory Committee (2 members)

- Downtown Faith community
- Downtown schools (1 representative)

The committee will also include the following members:

- AVI Executive Director
- VIHA representative
- University-based Researcher(s)

Other members may be appointed as necessary. These may include, for example, neighbors of any potential fixed site locations for needle exchange services or other impacted community members.

Staff members from AVI and the VIHA's Medical Health Office and Public Health will act as a resource to the Victoria Needle Exchange Advisory Committee.

All members must support the mandate of the Victoria Needle Exchange Services Advisory Committee. The members must have an understanding that needle exchange services are part of the provincial government's policy on harm reduction.

Member Selection Process

Members of the Advisory Committee will be appointed by their respective organizations to represent their interests. The composition of this Committee shall be reviewed after six months and members may decide on a more comprehensive selection process at that time.

The Committee as a whole has been selected to provide:

- Expertise in addiction and harm reduction issues
- Experience using needle exchange services
- Experience providing services to people who use needle exchange services
- Business representation
- Direct involvement with community associations and impacted neighborhoods

Governance and Decision-Making

Co-chairs will head the Committee. One co-chair will be from VIHA and the group will appoint the other co-chair.

Organizations will be asked to appoint a representative and an alternate if appropriate.

The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide a forum where client, community and stakeholder input can be received, issues formulated and program changes discussed and debated. The Committee will not make decisions for Needle Exchange Programs, but will be able to provide input and feedback. VIHA will assess the recommendations and report back to the Victoria Needle Exchange Advisory Committee. Should there be significant unresolved issues, the co-chairs will forward these matters on to VIHA's Chief Medical Officer of Health for a final decision.

Committee members will report out on meeting actions and content to their respective organizations.

Consensus decision-making regarding group process and recommendations will be applied.

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings will be held monthly or otherwise specified by the membership and/or as called by the co-chairs.