



# FACT SHEET

## WHAT PHARMACISTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

# Non-Prescription Sale of Syringes

February, 2015

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Office of AIDS data indicate that of the reported 117,553 people living with HIV/AIDS in California in 2012, approximately 15 percent reported a history of injection drug use. The CDPH Office of Viral Hepatitis estimates that at least 60 percent of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infections in the state are associated with injection drug use. Lack of access to new, sterile injection equipment is one of the primary risk factors that may lead to sharing of hypodermic needles and syringes, which puts people who inject drugs at high risk for HIV and HCV, as well as for hepatitis B infection.

### Key Provisions of California Law

Under [new legislation](#) effective January 1, 2015, licensed pharmacists have the discretion to sell hypodermic needles and syringes to adults age 18 and older without a prescription in order to reduce the spread of HIV, hepatitis C and other blood-borne diseases. There is no longer any limit on the number of needles and syringes that may be sold to a customer.

Adults age 18 and older may possess needles and syringes for personal use if acquired from a pharmacy, physician or authorized syringe exchange program. There is no longer any limit on the number that an adult may purchase and possess. These changes to California law were made by Assembly Bill 1743 (Ting, Chapter 331, Statutes of 2014).

Pharmacies that sell syringes without a prescription must:

- Provide for the safe disposal of needles and syringes by choosing one or more of the following options: selling or furnishing sharps containers or mail-back sharps containers, and/or providing on-site sharps collection and disposal;
- Provide written information or verbal counseling to customers at the time of sale on how to access drug treatment, access testing and treatment for HIV and HCV, and information about how to safely dispose of sharps waste; and
- Store needles and syringes in a manner that ensures that they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.

A [Patient Information Sheet](#) developed by CDPH/Office of AIDS and available for download on the Office of AIDS website covers the information above and can be provided to pharmacy customers.

More information and resources are available at [www.cdph.ca.gov/syringeaccess](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/syringeaccess).