



MAYOR FRANCISCO ESTRADA, CITY OF WATSONVILLE
MAYOR MARTINE WATKINS, CITY OF SANTA CRUZ
275 Main Street, Watsonville CA 95076
809 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

May 20, 2019

Dr. Karen Smith, Director
California Department of Public Health
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

***RE: OPPOSITION TO THE HARM REDUCTION COALITION APPLICATION FOR A
SYRINGE EXCHANGE PROGRAM IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY***

Dear Director Smith:


Serving as the Mayors of the cities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz, we share a deep commitment to prevention, harm reduction, and community well-being. We also share the sentiments of our police chiefs, county sheriff, fellow elected officials, and community members, and request that the State Department of Public Health reject the proposed application of the volunteer-based community group Harm Reduction Coalition of Santa Cruz County, which is currently seeking State certification to independently distribute a significant number of intravenous needles in our cities' parks and public spaces.

Although we oppose the Harm Reduction Coalition of Santa Cruz County's proposed needle giveaway, we recognize the intent behind the effort—harm reduction plays a critical role in preventing the spread of communicable diseases. The complex issue of drug addiction must be addressed responsibly and in partnership with our health care service providers, addiction specialists, law enforcement and community. Regrettably, the proposal before you does not meet these essential requirements.

As the Mayors of the cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville, we must prioritize the health and well-being of *all* of our residents. The Harm Reduction Coalition's proposed Syringe Exchange program, although well intentioned, is not right for our community at this time.

Respectfully,

Mayor Francisco Estrada
City of Watsonville


Mayor Martine Watkins
City of Santa Cruz