

September 13, 2017

The Honorable Susan Talamantes-Eggman
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4070
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 186 (Eggman): Safe Consumption Services in California- SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Talamantes-Eggman,

The California LGBT Health and Human Services Network is pleased to support your AB 186 (Eggman), which would allow a limited number of California counties to pilot test safe consumption services (SCS).

The California LGBT Health and Human Services Network is a statewide coalition of non-profit providers, community centers, and researchers working collectively to advocate for state level policies and resources that will advance LGBT health.

SCS are spaces for the safe consumption of pre-obtained drugs with unused syringes and injecting supplies (and in some cases, smoking supplies) in the presence of trained peers or staff who can intervene if overdose or other medical problems arise, as well as provide health education and referrals to other services as needed.

SCS have been found to reduce HIV and hepatitis C transmission, prevent overdose death, and increase uptake to medical and social services, including drug treatment. SCS also result in less public injecting and fewer discarded syringes and other drug-related litter in the community.

LGBT communities are disproportionately impacted by HIV and hepatitis C. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that the lifetime rate of HIV infection for African-American gay and bisexual men is 1 in 2, and for Latino gay and bisexual men is 1 in 4. California has stated its goal of getting to zero new transmissions for HIV, and SCS would be an important addition to our toolbox. Not only would the availability of spaces for safe consumption reduce the transmission of HIV, but could also help link people who are HIV-positive with the care they need to suppress their viral load. SCS can be a game-changer for LGBT people, for people living with HIV, and those at risk of HIV.

Thank you for your consideration and for your long-time leadership and support for LGBTQ health. If you have any questions regarding our position, please don't hesitate to contact me at awallner@health-access.org or 916-497-0923 ext. 802.

Sincerely,



Amanda Wallner, Director
California LGBT Health & Human Services Network

The California Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health and Human Services Network is a statewide coalition of more than 60 nonprofit direct service providers, community centers, researchers, and policy experts serving LGBT communities.