

Mr Sam Haddad
Director General
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Area Executive Office
entrance via Derby Street
Nepean Hospital Campus
PO Box 63
PENRITH NSW 2751
Telephone: (02) 4734 2120
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Attn: Wil Nino

Our Ref: TRIM 09/08025

7th September 2009

Dear Mr Haddad,

Re: Installation of a Needle/Syringe automatic vending machine and 120litre sharp disposal bin at the Auburn Community Hub

Access to clean injecting equipment is the single most effective way of reducing the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C.

As you may be aware, the Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) has operated in Auburn since the early 1990s, providing HIV and Hepatitis C prevention services to the people of the Auburn area. Current high rates of Hepatitis C infection mean that it is crucial to increase access to sterile injecting equipment, and Sydney West Area Health Service is planning to install a needle and syringe vending machine on the outside wall of the proposed Community Hub at Auburn Hospital.

This installation is an enhancement of the existing NSP outlet. The machine will provide additional access to clean injecting equipment on a 24-hour basis.

Sydney West Area Health Service currently has 8 Needle/ Syringe dispensing machines in service across the area. Machines have been operating in NSW since 1992 with approximately 102 machines installed on Health facilities across NSW.

A survey of Community Attitudes to the provision of NSP Services, which was undertaken in the Penrith / St Marys area in 2001 indicates that the community believe NSP Services should be provided from a Health run facility, with the majority of respondents citing hospital locations, (such as the currently proposed Auburn location) as the most appropriate.

The Auburn Hub will also provide 24-hour access to a sharps disposal bin, a prerequisite for the installation of a vending machine under *The Needle and Syringe Policy and Program Guidelines for NSW* (2006:6). Local disposal contractors indicate that approximately 75 per cent of the sharps waste is medical in nature; therefore the bin will provide a safe disposal location for the whole community, especially those such as diabetics, who generate substantial number of medical sharps.

Hospital security services have been briefed on the proposed vending machine installation, however, on the basis of the currently existing machines, it is not anticipated that there will

be any additional risk to the community.

If you have any further queries about the provision of NSP Services at Auburn please contact Ms Felicity Sheaves, Harm Minimisation Co-ordinator on 4734 3852.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Boyages', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Professor Steven Boyages
MB BS PhD DDU FRACP FAFPHM
Chief Executive
Sydney West Area Health Service