Vending Machines Provide Clean Needles for Puerto Rico’s Drug Users

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To stem transmission of HIV and hepatitis C among Puerto Rico’s intravenous drug users, Community Initiative, the island’s sole needle exchange program, is testing a vending machine program that provides clean syringes after-hours, The Associated Press reports.

According to the article, a single machine will provide clean syringes at night outside Community Initiative’s office in Hato Rey. Jose Vargas Vidot, MD, the group’s founder, said its drug counseling offices that provide clean injection equipment are only open during the day, and the machine is an attempt to reach out to younger drug users who are reluctant to seek counseling.

By inserting a card provided by Community Initiative, users can get syringes, cookers, cotton filters, gauze and sterile water to prepare drugs for injections.

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