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Syringe Service Programming is Good Public Health Policy

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As a recent Arizona transplant and co-director of the Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention at the Indiana University School of Public Health-Bloomington, I watch with interest Arizona's policy process to allow syringe-service programs. SSPs are public-health efforts providing sterile syringes and myriad other services to people who inject drugs.

While states are unique laboratories for policy innovation, bilateral state learning is often helpful. In 2015, Indiana considered and passed syringe-access policy following an HIV outbreak among people who injected drugs in Scott County. Prior to this, it was illegal to distribute and possess syringes for non-prescription drug use. As a result, 231 people are now infected with HIV in that rural community.

I offer a few insights for Arizona's consideration in the spirit of bilateral learning.