

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution:232
(A-23)

Introduced by: Minnesota

Subject: Supervised Injection Facilities (SIFs) Allowed by Federal Law

Referred to: Reference Committee B

- 1 Whereas, Drug overdose deaths have risen fivefold in the past 20 years in the United States¹;
2 and
3
4 Whereas, Between 2020 and 2021, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the age-adjusted
5 rate of drug overdose deaths rose more than 14% in the United States, with 106,699 drug
6 overdose deaths occurring in 2021²; and,
7
8 Whereas, A rigid, treatment-only approach to substance use disorder (SUD) is not sufficient to
9 reduce drug overdoses among people with SUD who (a) are not accepting of treatment, or (b)
10 have accepted treatment but have since relapsed on a difficult road to recovery; and
11
12 Whereas, People with SUD who die from drug overdose will never have the opportunity to
13 successfully enter or complete treatment; and
14
15 Whereas, In other countries, the introduction of supervised injection facilities (SIFs), or facilities
16 that allow people who use drugs to use previously obtained substances under the supervision of
17 healthcare professionals, has been associated with lower rates of overdose-induced mortality
18 and morbidity, safer injection behavior, greater take-up of addiction treatment programs, and
19 constant, or lower, rates of crime and drug-related public nuisance^{3,4}; and
20
21 Whereas, While the evidence supporting SIFs in other countries may not be generalizable to the
22 United States, it supports the reasonableness of conducting American-based SIF pilot programs
23 and evaluations; and
24
25 Whereas, Any operation of an SIF, including SIF pilot programs and evaluations, are prohibited
26 under federal law⁵; and
27
28 Whereas, In 2021, a federal appellate court ruled in favor of a lawsuit originally filed by the
29 Trump Administration against a Philadelphia-based SIF in 2019⁶; and
30
31 Whereas, The Biden Administration has not actively filed suit against, or actively permitted, the
32 operation of two SIFs in New York City that have been operating since November 2021⁷; and
33
34 Whereas, Between November 2021 and December 2022, the two operating SIFs in New York
35 City served more than 2,300 people with substance use disorder and reversed more than 700
36 overdoses⁸; and
37
38 Whereas, The uncertainty about Executive Branch enforcement of the federal law prohibiting
39 SIFs deters the potential operators of American-based SIF pilot programs and evaluations; and

1 Whereas, While the current policy of this American Medical Association supports American-
2 based SIF pilot programs and evaluations, it does not sufficiently address the need for this
3 American Medical Association to pursue the amendments to federal law, and/or commitments
4 from the Executive Branch, necessary to address the legal concerns of potential operators of
5 American-based SIF pilot programs and evaluations⁹; therefore be it
6

7 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association amend policy H-95.925, "*Pilot*
8 *Implementation of Supervised Injection Facilities*," by addition to read as follows:
9

10 **Pilot Implementation of Supervised Injection Facilities H-95.925**

11 "Our AMA supports the development and implementation of pilot supervised injection facilities
12 (SIFs) in the United States that are designed, monitored, and evaluated to generate data to
13 inform policymakers on the feasibility, effectiveness, and legal aspects of SIFs in reducing
14 harms and health care costs related to injection drug use, including supporting changes to
15 federal law to permit the operation of pilot SIFs in the United States. Until federal law permits
16 the operation of pilot SIFs in the United States, our AMA will regularly pursue explicit
17 commitments from each active presidential administration that federal lawsuits will not be filed
18 against operators of pilot SIFs. (Modify Current HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Minimal - less than \$1,000

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REFERENCES

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2. Ibid.
3. AMA wants new approaches to combat synthetic and injectable drugs. American Medical Association. <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-wants-new-approaches-combat-synthetic-and-injectable-drugs>. Published June 12, 2017. Accessed February 21, 2023.
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5. 21 U.S. Code § 856 - Maintaining drug-involved premises. Legal Information Institute at Cornell Law School. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/21/856>. Accessed February 21, 2023.
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8. Lisa K. Sen. Rivera to Hochul: Use 'your pen' to expand supervised injection sites. Sen. Rivera urges exec action on supervised injection sites. <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/politics/2023/02/01/sen--rivera-to-hochul--use--your-pen--to-expand-supervised-injection-sites->. Published January 31, 2021. Accessed February 21, 2023.
9. Pilot Implementation of Supervised Injection Facilities H-95.925. AMA Policy Finder. American Medical Association. <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/Supervised%20injection?uri=%2FAMADoc%2FHOD.xml-H-95.925.xml>. Published 2017. Accessed February 21, 2023.
10. Ibid.

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

Pilot Implementation of Supervised Injection Facilities H-95.925

Our AMA supports the development and implementation of pilot supervised injection facilities (SIFs) in the United States that are designed, monitored, and evaluated to generate data to inform policymakers on the feasibility, effectiveness, and legal aspects of SIFs in reducing harms and health care costs related to injection drug use.

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