



RESOLUTION No. 2020-21-14

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REFERRED TO: A.S. Board of Directors

ADOPTED: March 12, 2021

SUBJECT: Resolution to Support Dignity of People Who Inject Drugs

WHEREAS, the Associated Students (A.S.) Board of Directors of Humboldt State University (HSU) is the single recognized voice for over 6,500 students; and,

WHEREAS, the Mission of the Associated Students of Humboldt State University serves to "assist in the protection of rights and interests of the individual student and the student body," and to "stimulate the educational, social, physical, and cultural well-being of the University community"; and,

WHEREAS, Humboldt State enrolls students that require the use of needles (sharps) to administer medications, such as insulin, hormone replacement therapy, and other doctor-prescribed medications for health treatments; and,

WHEREAS, California State University campuses such as Sacramento State have sharps disposal containers in their ADA restrooms located within common areas behind unlocked doors accessible to the entire campus; and,

WHEREAS, the Principles of Harm Reduction are:¹

1. Accepts, for better or worse, that licit and illicit drug use is part of our world and chooses to work to minimize its harmful effects rather than simply ignore or condemn them
2. Understands drug use as a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses a continuum of behaviors from severe use to total abstinence, and acknowledges that some ways of using drugs are clearly safer than others
3. Establishes quality of individual and community life and well-being — not necessarily cessation of all drug use — as the criteria for successful interventions and policies
4. Calls for the non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services and resources to people who use drugs and the communities in which they live in order to assist them in reducing attendant harm
5. Ensures that people who use drugs and those with a history of drug use routinely have a real voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them

¹ National Harm Reduction Coalition, "Principles of Harm Reduction - Harm Reduction Coalition," Harmreduction.org, 2019, <https://harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/>.

6. Affirms people who use drugs (PWUD) themselves as the primary agents of reducing the harms of their drug use and seeks to empower PWUD to share information and support each other in strategies which meet their actual conditions of use
7. Recognizes that the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination, and other social inequalities affect both people's vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with drug-related harm
8. Does not attempt to minimize or ignore the real and tragic harm and danger that can be associated with illicit drug use

WHEREAS, according to the World Health Organization, "Harm reduction (including needle/syringe programmes and opioid substitution therapy) is an evidence-based approach to HIV prevention, treatment and care for people who inject drugs and is strongly supported by WHO and other UN agencies."²; and,

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Disease Control, "Nearly 30 years of research shows that comprehensive syringe services programs (SSPs) are safe, effective, and cost-saving, do not increase illegal drug use or crime, and play an important role in reducing the transmission of viral hepatitis, HIV and other infections."³; and,

WHEREAS, according to an Australian study, "For every one dollar invested in NSP's (needle, syringe programs), more than four dollars were returned (additional to the investment) in healthcare cost-savings in the short term (ten years) if only direct costs are included; greater returns are expected over longer time horizons."⁴; and,

WHEREAS, the same study found "if these programs were to decrease in size, or cease to operate, then "relatively large increases in both HIV and HCV could be expected with associated losses of health and life and reduced returns on investment," which could result in a huge increase in healthcare and community related costs."⁵; and,

WHEREAS, further research including an annotated bibliography detailing the effectiveness of Harm Reduction practices is available from the Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction,⁶ an American Red Cross recognized local non-profit organization.⁷; and,

² "Global HIV, Hepatitis and STIs Programmes," www.who.int, n.d., <https://www.who.int/teams/global-hiv-hepatitis-and-stis-programmes/populations/people-who-use-drugs>.

³ "Persons Who Inject Drugs (PWID)," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/pwid/index.html>.

⁴ "Australian Department of Health | Executive Summary," www1.health.gov.au, accessed January 22, 2021, <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/illicit-pubs-needle-return-2-toc~illicit-pubs-needle-return-2-exe>.

⁵ K. Lanktree, "5 Reasons Harm Reduction Initiatives Can Help Addicts, Communities," Oklahoman.com, June 5, 2014, <https://oklahoman.com/article/4888120/5-reasons-harm-reduction-initiatives-can-help-addicts-communities>.

⁶ "Annotated Bibliography," Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction, June 21, 2018, <https://hachr707.org/harm-reduction/harm-reduction-research/annotated-bibliography/>.

⁷ "Red Cross Hero Award!," Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction, June 1, 2019, <https://hachr707.org/2019/06/01/red-cross-hero-award/>.

WHEREAS, allowing for the safe disposal of sharps prevents janitorial and all campus members from the dangers of pricking themselves with used needles; and,

WHEREAS, Humboldt State's annual security report shows the campus historically has double if not triple the amount of drug arrests and referrals compared to CSU campuses of similar size⁸; and,

WHEREAS, attached is a letter of support from Ned Peck, LCSW and Staff Psychotherapist and Group Coordinator of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS); therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, that the Associated Students calls on HSU to add sharps disposal containers that meet the CDC standards on campus, starting in all ADA approved restrooms with restrooms in campus dorms taking priority.⁹

RESOLVED, that the Associated Students calls on the University Senate to endorse this document and join Associated Students in advocating for HSU to publicly implement the principles of Harm Reduction on campus to improve student, faculty, and staff wellbeing.

RESOLVED, that the Associated Students calls on the Student Health Center to provide printed harm reduction materials and brochures similar to those distributed by the Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction.¹⁰

RESOLVED, that the Associated Students calls on the Student Health Center to continue regular NARCAN training and provide students with NARCAN so that they might be agents of life-saving action.

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to, but not limited to the Director of the Student Health Center, the Director of Risk Management, the Director of Facilities Management, the Lead for Health Education and Clinic Support Services, President Tom Jackson, The University Senate, The Lumberjack, El Leñador.

⁸ https://police.humboldt.edu/sites/default/files/police/hsu_asr_2020.pdf;
https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Compliance/documents/2020-annual-security-report_stanislaus_state.pdf; <https://www.csuci.edu/clery/annual-security-report.htm>;

⁹ "CDC - Bloodborne Infectious Diseases - Stop Sticks : Sharps Disposal - NORA Workplace Safety and Health Topic," www.cdc.gov, May 7, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/nora/councils/hcsa/stopsticks/sharpsdisposal.html>.

¹⁰ "Harm Reduction Brochures," Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction, September 22, 2017, <https://hachr707.org/harm-reduction/harm-reduction-resources/>.