

## HBs 5178 and 5179 Overview

Last year, over 100,000 people died of opioid-related overdoses in the United States, with 2,993 of them being Michiganders.<sup>i</sup> Both HBs 5178 and 5179 help to combat the ongoing opioid epidemic and reduce harm.

**HB 5178** empowers individuals and localities to create syringe service programs (SSPs) if they so choose. SSPs are community-based prevention programs that meet people where they are, connecting people who use substances with resources and comprehensive care.

SSPs offer many services such as:

- Coaching and connection to substance use disorder treatment
- Disease testing
- Providing vaccinations
- Overdose prevention training
- Assistance in accessing medical care



Currently, there are 97 SSPs operating in 53 of Michigan's counties.<sup>ii</sup> From October 2018 through June 2023, **167,573** participants went through Michigan SSPs.<sup>iii</sup> SSPs have been shown to save lives, reduce the spread of diseases, and connect people to treatment.

In 2020, Michigan SSPs saved at least 2,000 lives by administering naloxone, a medication that quickly reverses opioid overdoses in real time.<sup>iv</sup>

According to MDHHS, SSPs in Michigan have been shown to reduce HIV and hepatitis C prevalence by as much as **50%** and SSP participants have been **5 times more likely** to access substance use disorder and recovery services than people using opioids who are not enrolled in a program.<sup>v</sup>

HB 5178 would allow SSPs to be expanded statewide, helping to meet the needs of Michiganders who are currently unable to access treatment. The CDC found that of all the states, Michigan was ranked 5th in the number of most vulnerable counties to the spread of diseases amongst people who inject drugs.<sup>vi</sup> An expansion of SSPs into those counties, largely in northern, rural Michigan, would help to reduce the spread of disease and number of overdoses and deaths.

As of this August, 33 states and D.C. explicitly authorize SSPs. HB 5178 would make Michigan number 34.<sup>vii</sup>

**HB 5179** would remove testing products such as fentanyl test strips from the state's definition of drug paraphernalia.

This would enable people who use drugs to test their drugs to ensure that they are not contaminated with fentanyl, thereby reducing the chance of an accidental overdose and death.

Similar legislation has recently passed in South Dakota and Pennsylvania with bipartisan support.

<sup>i</sup> <https://medicine.umich.edu/dept/psychiatry/news/archive/202305/cdc-2022-national-overdose-deaths-hit-new-record-decline-michigan>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/SSP/SSP-Directory\\_new---4-3-23.pdf?rev=8211760e32a843d2baa6edeabc88a5003&hash=729B8B46D206DFBFFA1EF996A9E68920](https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/SSP/SSP-Directory_new---4-3-23.pdf?rev=8211760e32a843d2baa6edeabc88a5003&hash=729B8B46D206DFBFFA1EF996A9E68920)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/SSP/Michigan-SSP-2023-Q2-Report-v-2.pdf?rev=a1cb4cecca454d069a9afc37e97602dd&hash=B93910221B2BD7015FC751DFE5014C79>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.substanceprevention.com/#:~:text=50%25-.SSPs%20are%20associated%20with%20an%20estimated%2050.in%20HIV%20and%20ICV%20incidence.&text=In%202020%2C%20Michigan%20syringe%20service.least%202%2C000%20lives%20with%20naloxone.&text=More%20than%2015%2C000%20naloxone%20IC.state%20of%20Michigan%20in%202023.>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/keep-mi-healthy/mentalhealth/drugcontrol/syringe-service-programs/ssp-101>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/Programs/Community-Health/harm-reduction-eval-michigan-slides.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://legislativeanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Syringe-Services-Programs-Summary-of-State-Laws.pdf>