

June 12, 2018

Ms. Carol Crump, MFT  
California Department of Public Health  
P.O. Box 997377, MS 0500  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Dear Ms. Crump,

On behalf of the Anaheim City Council, the City of Anaheim is submitting this letter to the California Department of Public Health to express our opposition to an application by the Orange County Needle Exchange Program (OCNEP) to provide a syringe exchange service in the City of Anaheim.

Based on the location indicated in their application, it appears OCNEP is intending to serve our downtown area near La Palma Park, an area where the city has significantly reduced encampments and will be relocating homeless services, such as check-in of personal belongings. Further, this area is adjacent to a dog park, stadium events for our schools, soccer and baseball fields for our children, and open space for families and the community to gather. Of equal significance, the city learned about OCNEPs application from residents; OCNEP has failed to contact the city, law enforcement and neighborhood associations, thereby not “respecting... local preference,” as directed by Governor Brown.

Further, the City of Anaheim also has concerns related to the prior operations of OCNEP. Specifically, the City of Santa Ana recently revoked OCNEPs permit due to uncapped hypodermic needles littering the area in and around their downtown and endangering the public who work and visit the area. Bringing this program into our La Palma Park area where we have a dog park, stadium events for our schools, fields for our children to play soccer and baseball and open space for families to gather would not be an appropriate place to introduce this type of program.

In 2013, the city launched Coming Home Anaheim as a tool to address the needs of the homeless through collaboration with other cities, local service providers and faith-based communities. It was through this collaboration that today the city, through our contract with City Net, have successfully moved over 1,200 individuals out of homelessness into housing with

a 92% retention rate. In addition, in January 2017, the city created Drug Free Anaheim where anyone suffering from addiction can simply walk into our police station and ask for services, such as detox, partial hospitalization, outpatient counseling and/or support group referrals. To date, almost 300 individuals have participated in the program with over 220 individuals in treatment facilities. Drug Free Anaheim is managed by professional experts in the field of addiction and they have expressed great concerns with this syringe exchange program by OCNEP, advising the program could potentially disrupt the successful services of recovery treatment in Anaheim.

Anaheim is a proven leader in providing compassion and outreach to not only our homeless population but also those dealing with drug addiction and it would not be prudent to offer a program that would potentially re-introduce a negative attraction into our community who is already making progress in our pathways to home, healing and work.

Based on the above concerns and recent experiences with our neighboring city, the City of Anaheim opposes the OCNEP application to establish a syringe exchange program in Anaheim.

Sincerely,

City of Anaheim