



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR MARK FARRELL ANNOUNCES NEW PUBLIC
HEALTH TEAM DEDICATED TO REMOVING SYRINGES
FROM COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT SAN FRANCISCO**

*Joint effort between the Mayor's Office and Department of Public Health will focus targeted
cleanup efforts in response to resident complaints*

San Francisco, CA— Mayor Mark Farrell today announced the creation of a dedicated team of public health professionals hired specifically to address the syringe litter epidemic on San Francisco streets.

“We are taking an aggressive, focused approach to clean up needles on our streets and sidewalks,” said Mayor Farrell. “This situation on our streets is unacceptable—I will not allow the status quo to continue. When a resident calls in about needles, we are staffed to respond immediately. I want to make sure when a business calls, our team will go to the storefront. We will have the right people at the right places at the right times to address this epidemic.”

Ten additional workers will be hired specifically for syringe cleanup duties, significantly increasing San Francisco's focused, coordinated response to the issue of needle litter. The City currently has four workers in a rapid response team to do needle cleanup and respond to resident complaints —this measure will more than triple existing efforts.

The new hires—who will be contracted through the San Francisco AIDS Foundation—will conduct targeted sweeps of hot spots based on complaint data collected from 311, the City's one-stop center for reporting information on municipal services.

Along with increasing staffing, the City will add an additional three disposal boxes for used needles. The initiative will improve data and measuring capabilities, while also ensuring that workers are on the ground seven days a week, including weekends and early mornings.

“The Health Department is committed to cleaner streets in San Francisco,” said Barbara Garcia, Director of Health. “For the last five years we have made an extra effort to improve the pickup of needle litter. This is an environmental health issue that affects everyone in the city, and it is a problem for cities all over the world. By increasing our response capabilities we expect to see a significant reduction in needles on the streets.”

The additional resources devoted to cleanup duties will bolster the City's existing efforts. The Department of Public Health (DPH) and its partners, including the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, collect more than 275,000 used needles per month. DPH has installed 19 disposal



boxes in areas of the City where drug use is prevalent. All 13 syringe access sites in San Francisco are disposal sites as well and all the City's 18 Pit Stops—portable public toilets—are needle disposal sites. In addition, every Walgreens in San Francisco is a disposal site.

“The City's increased investment will allow us to build upon current disposal efforts which result in the collection and disposal of more than 275,000 used needles per month,” said Joe Hollendoner, CEO of San Francisco AIDS Foundation. “I am deeply thankful to the Mayor and the Department of Public Health for their steadfast commitment to the public's health and safety.”

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